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THE PHILOSOPHY OF PREACHING

THE

PHILOSOPHY OF PREACHING

BY

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BROOKLYN, N.Y.

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TO MY WIFE

PREFATORY NOTE.

This little volume contains the lectures given in the month of February of the present year, before the Divinity School of Yale University, on the Lyman Beecher foundation. It is not a treatise on homiletics. The questions connected with the preparation and the delivery of sermons have been intentionally passed by. The aim has been to deal with the more fundamental inquiry of the end of all preaching, and to emphasize the universal elements of all effective religious address. There has been no citation of authorities, for the simple reason that none were consulted and used. The views here presented had slowly taken form during a ministry of twenty-five years, and they have at least the merit of profound personal conviction, which the author has been encour-

aged, by friends in whose critical judgment he has great confidence, to believe may be of service to a wider circle than the one to which they were first given. The form of direct address has been preserved, as a change of literary dress would have involved a radical reconstruction of the material, with the danger of an enlargement in bulk, which might have proved unwelcome to the reader. For in an age when many books are written, brevity is a quality which every busy student appreciates.

A. J. F. B.

BROOKLYN, N.Y., March, 1890.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF PREACHING.

I.

No man can achieve solid and satisfactory success in any calling, who is not convinced that the services which he renders are of substantial benefit to the public, and that what he gives is a full equivalent for what he receives. He who suspects that he is merely tolerated, or that he occupies the place of a dependent, or who discovers that he is retained when he has ceased to supply a living demand, inevitably suffers in the consciousness of manly independence; and where manhood shrivels, work loses its dignity and power. I have always admired the spirit of the man, who is said to have applied for employment to a wealthy and charitable merchant. The poor fellow was told to remove a huge pile of stones from one end of a field to another. When this task was completed he was ordered to replace them in their original position. This

he did somewhat reluctantly, but when his employer sent word to have the operation repeated a second time and as often as the employee chose, the latter promptly and firmly rebelled. He did not care to busy himself at a useless task. It made him feel like a beggar, and this conscious degradation was to him a greater evil than hunger. And he was right. There is dignity in labor only when it is directed to useful ends, and the vigor with which a true man will prosecute and push his chosen work will depend upon his conviction of its necessity to the welfare of the world. The final cause of labor is an ethical and extra-personal one. The immediate stimulus is supplied by the physical needs of the individual, and by the requirements of the household, but amid the multitudinous industries of modern civilization the stagnation and degradation of character can be prevented, and the noblest manhood can come to maturity only through the conviction that the humblest toiler is a public benefactor.

To this wholesome law the pulpit is no exception. It is idle to claim for it the august dignity of a Divine institution; for

such a claim can be substantiated only by the eternal necessity, and the essential rationality, of its sphere. It is not enough for some men to insist, with whatever honesty and emphasis, that God has called them to preach; unless their message compels an audience, and produces conviction of its Divine origin and intrinsic worth, the world will look upon its prophets as misguided enthusiasts. The counsels of God are always the embodiment of infinite power, wisdom, holiness, and love. They are woven into the essential and eternal needs of human nature, and of human history. No commission can be supposed to bear the Divine seal, which does not convey a message which every man needs to hear, and which cannot grow obsolete with any conceivable advance in civilization. Is preaching such an agency, instituted for definite and lofty ends, incapable of being eliminated or supplanted while history runs its course? That question confronts us at the very beginning of our work, and every man should settle that debate in his own mind before he takes upon himself the holy vows of Christian ordination.

Paul exhorted Timothy to suffer no man

to despise him, to maintain his self-respect by making full proof of his ministry, even as he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, among angry Jews and mocking Greeks, because he knew it to be the power of God unto salvation for all that believed. The advice has not become obsolete. It was never needed more than now. There is no place where decay and loss of power so surely and swiftly follow upon moral timidity, or that want of intellectual poise which a noble self-respect insures, as the pulpit. The preacher, as the herald of God, should be the humblest of men; but that humility should inspire him with an unusual and sustained boldness when he speaks to his fellows, under the profound conviction that what he has to say the whole world, from prince to beggar, needs to hear and heed.

All this may seem to you commonplace, requiring no argument. For years your studies and associations have been such as to impress upon you the necessity and the dignity of the preacher's vocation. But you will soon leave these quiet retreats of Christian learning, and you will be summoned to wrestle with a prosaic world.

There are some things which no theological seminary can teach you. There is no preparation which can save you from the wrench which every man must endure when the call for adjustment to his practical environment presses upon him. Some men never heed that call, and they either drift out of the ministry, or they console themselves with the doctrine of total depravity, bewailing the degeneracy of human nature which prevents any man from having more than a handful of hearers unless he be either a heretic or a mountebank. You must have faith in your message, and you must have faith in men; and if your message fails to command attention, the most sensible thing is to conclude that you have been lacking in practical skill. Never suffer the suspicion to shadow you that the message is not adapted to the hearer, nor that the Christian preacher is gradually becoming crowded out of his place.

That suspicion pervades the air of modern life. There are men who will treat you with haughty indifference, or with condescending civility, simply because you are a clergyman. They do not believe in

the manliness of your vocation. They will rarely come to hear you preach. They may take a personal liking to you, and they may avail themselves of your services at funerals and weddings, but they would think more of you if you were a hod-carrier or a bricklayer. They will say it is a pity that you became a priest, seeing there is so much manly stuff in you. A sentiment like that cannot be argued down. You must live it down, and you can live it down only as the conviction in you is at white heat that your work is the manliest under the sun, seeking the highest practical ends and securing the most stable results. That will give tone and nerve to your speech. That will make you impatient of all rhetorical redundancies and pyrotechnics. That will give pungency and power to your style. The ingrained consciousness that your work is manly, will make your pulpit a throne of manliness, of strong and sturdy utterance, and they who once sneered will come to listen with respect, and will not go away without profit. But even if they do not come, you cannot afford to enter upon your work unless you have faith in its essential manliness, and in its eternal worth.

Nor is it simply the non-Christian element of society which discounts the value of preaching. The sermon has become the butt of universal ridicule. Even ministers speak slightingly of it. You will be reminded that if you pray more than five minutes you are insufferably tedious, and that a sermon of half an hour is as much as the average audience will endure. In many churches the sermon has been crowded out by the service, and has come to be regarded as an appendage. In the Roman ritual it is altogether overshadowed. The printing press is supposed to have made the pulpit superfluous, or at least to have seriously narrowed the scope of its influence; and there are not a few earnest Christian men who raise the question whether some readjustment is not called for, whether the preacher should not gracefully retire before he is forced to withdraw, and is left behind like a shattered hulk by the retiring tide. May it not be that the preacher was indispensable while there were no movable types, and that with the invention of printing, and the diffusion of intelligence, his importance has ceased? The inquiry is not a very logical one, in the face of the

fact that during the Middle Ages, when there were no printing presses, there was very little preaching, and that since the days of Gutenberg there has never been so much as now. The printed page has not made speech obsolete. We do not read letters to each other in the household, and we drop the pen and the telegraph in favor of a personal interview, when we are determined to secure our end. I have known men to cross the continent to procure information promptly and at first hand. The pen may be mightier than the sword, but it is not mightier than the tongue. Things are talked about before they are written about, and all great movements, such as the Reformation, the revival under the Wesleys, the anti-slavery campaign, and the temperance reform, depend, for their inauguration and success, upon the prophets of fiery speech. There never has been an important political campaign when the stump did not take precedence of the tripod. The truth is that the power of speech is man's supreme physical endowment, as the power of thought makes him the crowned and sceptred monarch of the universe.

The printed page is only an enlargement in the sphere of the written manuscript; and if the manuscript cannot supersede the spoken word, there is no reason to suppose that any cheapening process of multiplying copies can do it. There are things which the types cannot reproduce. The recorded sermons of Whitefield do not glow with the fire of his wonderful oratory. The discourses of Jonathan Edwards fail to disclose the secret of his quiet and resistless power. The speeches of the greatest orators are read without emotion, when the audiences that heard them were swept and swayed as by a whirlwind. The face of Cicero gave power to his words. The concentrated energy of Demosthenes carried conviction with his argument. The kindling eye, the play of emotion on the mobile countenance, the curling of the lips, the pointed finger or sudden thrust of the hand, the erect and quivering frame, the blood mounting to the temples, the momentary pause, the rush of rapid, eager speech, all that belongs to an intense and vital personality, grappling with great thoughts, moved by strong passions, urged forward to high endeavor,

cannot be transferred to plates of metal and traced upon paper. If sublimity consists in the employment of the simplest agents for the attainment of the loftiest ends, then there is nothing sublimer than hinging the triumph of righteousness in the earth upon the energy of human speech. The Greeks laughed at the dream. In their judgment it was concentrated folly. They might have reflected that their greatest reformer and philosopher, the peerless Socrates, never wrote a line, but left the deep impress of his ministry upon their intellectual and moral life by the use of incisive speech. John the Baptist was only a voice, but he was a voice that waked the dead. It was by the spoken word that our Lord Himself began and completed His wonderful career. In that choice they all acted rationally and deliberately. It is the spoken word that pierces to the core, and secures immediate results. There is no disparagement of the press in this judgment. It has a mighty, a noble, a wide, and enlarging mission. It is the ally of human speech, not its enemy or supplanter. So long as language remains the exponent and vehicle of thought, so long must the lips retain

the primacy in its expression and enforcement. Speech must remain to the end of time the chief agency in the dissemination of truth, and in the inculcation of righteousness.

Assuming, then, that you are conscious of the dignity and of the vital importance of your calling, as an agency whose necessity is rooted in the moral order of human life and history, disclosing the evidence of its Divine appointment in the pertinacity of its continuance, and in its quiet refusal to be shelved by studied neglect, or crowded out of place by competing aspirants, it is pertinent, before dealing with the specific elements which should enter into all preaching, to inquire: What is the mission of the Christian preacher? What should be the ultimate aim of his endeavor? In what vital, organic, permanent relation does his vocation stand to the unfolding life of the world? The traditional answers to these questions have long been familiar to you; but they have dealt more with the construction of the single sermon, than with the philosophy of preaching. They have not brought out distinctly the final cause of all preaching, in view of which it is seen to be

a rational unity amid all the forms which it has assumed, and in whose attainment it should find its perpetual inspiration and its final reward.

One large, earnest, aggressive section of the Christian Church, whose piety and consecrated zeal are beyond dispute, maintains that preaching should not only be evangelical, but evangelistic. The preacher is simply a herald, and the substance of his message is the proclamation of the free forgiveness of sins, and the heritage of eternal life, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. In obedience to that gracious assurance, men are to repent of their sins and believe on Christ. The message of the pulpit is mainly to the unconverted, and every new disciple is regarded as under immediate and incessant obligation to increase the registry of converts. To save souls is said to be the preacher's business, and the salvation of the soul is associated with some definite, formal, and public act of confession and committal. The preacher, therefore, should incessantly urge men to immediate and pronounced decision. The normal life of the Church is assumed to be one of perpetual revival, in the restricted sense of that

phrase. Under such a theory, preaching becomes hortatory. It never passes beyond the rudiments of religious instruction. It may make use of the Pauline epistles, but it cannot move in their deep and broad grooves. It is constantly tempted to discount and discourage thorough and systematic training in Christian intelligence, and to make numerical increase the standard of ministerial efficiency. It counts the converts, it neglects to weigh them. Its ammunition is speedily exhausted, and it can live only by frequent change of place. It is ill adapted to long pastorates, which demand a wider range of instruction.

I am not condemning the evangelistic school of preachers. They have been an immense blessing to Christendom. They have had, and have still, a providential mission. We do not want less, but more, of the evangelistic temper. The revivalistic form of preaching is the only one which is suited to pagan communities, and without it no inroads can be made upon the ignorant and degraded masses of nominal Christendom. It is needed, too, in the highest places, where the pride of reason and the complacency of self-righteousness

resist and resent the claims of the Gospel. Its fire should burn in the heart of every herald of the cross. No preacher should permit himself to lose the power of direct, searching, practical appeal, and the everlasting "Now is the day of salvation" should be the undertone and momentum of all his speech. But the evangelistic theory of preaching is partial. It fails to reach all classes, and it cannot long hold those whom it does reach. It has no meat for strong men. It is too exclusively emotional, dealing only with the rudiments of religious truth. It fails to touch the intellectual and social life of man at a thousand points. Christianity, as embodying the power and wisdom of God, must be comprehensive and cosmopolitan. It must have a message for all, and it must master all the forces of civilization. It cannot neglect the university in order to redeem the hovel. It has no choice in the matter, if it be the Word of God to man; and hence, in every age, the Church has been the patron of sound learning and the founder of schools. There must be an educated ministry. There must be Christian scholars, experts in historical and literary criticism, equipped with all

the learning of their day. While therefore the evangelist has his place, his methods and aims do not exhaust the function of preaching, and we must seek for a more comprehensive statement of the Christian preacher's mission.

The evangelistic theory of the sermon is faulty in another respect. When the aim of preaching is regarded as inciting men to believe on Christ, that they may be saved, a twofold danger is imminent. Salvation is apt to be regarded as synonymous with future and eternal blessedness, and the relation of faith to such blessedness assumes a mechanical aspect. The eternal destiny of a soul is made to hinge upon a single formal act or word. The Biblical emphasis is on holiness, not on happiness, on a present and progressive purity of life; and faith is the soul's habitual fellowship with God in Christ, by whose Spirit renewing and sanctifying energy is imparted. The evangelistic theory of preaching is really sacramentarian at heart. It assumes that the cleavage between heaven and hell is made by the word spoken and heard; just as the Romanist confines the grace of eternal redemption to the baptized. It virtu-

ally restricts the operation of the Holy Spirit within the lines of evangelical Christendom, and makes the pulpit the throne of eternal judgment. But no one has ever ventured to press the logic to its inevitable and paralyzing conclusion. The universal salvation of all who die in infancy is an article of Christian faith which cannot be made to harmonize with the theory that the design of preaching is to fix the eternal destiny of souls, to save them in the sense of getting them into heaven. That article has been adopted by the sternest school of Calvinism in our day. Granting it to be true, it is plain that the ordinary means of grace cannot constitute the general and fundamental condition of eternal redemption. The great majority of the saved are presumed, by the theory of infant salvation, to belong to those who never in this life heard even the name of Jesus Christ. The sweep of redemption is wider than the voice of the preacher. He is not the representative of God's judicial action. It will not do to say that only adults fall under the rule that eternal destiny hinges upon receiving or rejecting the Gospel, that infants and

idiots constitute a gracious and reasonable exception; for in that case infanticide might be regarded as a virtue; and besides, the exception is so tremendous that it hopelessly vitiates the generalization which assumes that preaching is the great sifting process by which the wheat is separated from the chaff. It cannot be the preacher's business to people heaven. He does not carry the keys of death and of the underworld upon his girdle. The eternal destinies of men are in God's secret and unsearchable keeping, and cannot, in consistency with our faith in the salvation of infants, which we regard as Scripturally warranted, be supposed to be bound up with the work assigned to the preacher of the Gospel. Both in its milder and in its sterner form, therefore, the evangelistic theory of preaching fails to be consistent and satisfactory.

In sharpest contrast with the evangelistic conception of preaching is what I venture to call the evolutional. It assumes that the religious life is germinally and potentially present in every human soul. It substitutes culture and development for conversion. It addresses every man as a son of

God and an heir of heaven, and endeavors to stir within him the recognition of these prerogatives. It makes the sermon a pious meditation, a devotional monologue, an emotional deliverance. It claims that in Christian assemblies, at least, the only true function of preaching is the development of the religious sentiment, enveloping and pervading the community. Men are asleep, not dead. They need waking up, not resurrection from a moral grave. This theory of the sermon finds its most illustrious advocate and exponent in Schleiermacher, and in the German pulpit its influence has been marked and salutary. It crowded the shallow and lifeless rationalism to the wall, by the universal basis for religion which it found in human nature, in the sense of absolute dependence. Maurice, Kingsley, and Robertson are notable representatives of the same school, and this form of the sermon is characteristic of Broad Churchmanship. Robertson's frequent thrusts at the Evangelicals are not due to slight and occasional divergencies in doctrinal judgment, but to radical difference of method in dealing with men. They addressed men as sinners, who could be made the sons of God only by

a supernatural act of grace; he regarded adoption as a universal act in Christ, the indefeasible dignity and heritage of every child of Adam, a treasure hidden in the field, of whose existence every man should be apprized. Thus the burden of the sermon becomes, "you are saved," not "flee from the wrath to come." Whatever judgment may be passed upon this theory of preaching, the earnestness and power of its exponents cannot be called in question. They have sapped and undermined the movement toward Unitarianism.

The profound and permanent revolution inaugurated by Schleiermacher is familiar to every student of religious life in Germany. In his own case the theory of the sermon grew out of his theological system, so far as he had any. It is difficult to class him. He was a pantheist in philosophy, a Calvinist in his doctrine of decrees, a Universalist in his conception of the scope of redemption. The incarnation was the historical emergence and expression of a universal fact. The mediation of Christ involved a universal restoration to holiness. The decree of God is one and singular, executed in the final and eternal extinc-

tion of evil. Effectual calling is universal. At the core of the most imbruted soul hides and throbs the indestructible germ of life, wrapped about by the sheathings of ignorance and sin. To tear off these bandages, and to give that hidden life its opportunity of expression and expansion, is the business of the preacher. The soul of man is religious by creative constitution; it is Christian by the redemptive energy of the Son of God. Faith is its normal life, through the feeling of absolute dependence, which no amount of scepticism or immorality can eradicate.

With such a philosophical basis, the sermon could be nothing else than a gentle, persuasive appeal to the muffled inner man. Nor can it admit any exception. It must speak the same language in Pekin as in Berlin; and if it has failed to evangelize the capital of German Christendom, its moral energy will not suffice to storm the citadels of heathenism. It may work well with a limited class, but the limitation of its efficiency proves that the theory upon which it is based does not agree with the stubborn facts. Christlieb pronounces it an ideal conception, something to be earn-

estly and devoutly hoped for and kept in view, but he insists that the aggressive and missionary vocation of the Church demands also the evangelistic form of preaching, with its pungent and urgent summons to immediate repentance. But all men need to hear and heed that call. The new birth is a universal necessity. The incompleteness of Schleiermacher's method lies in the fact that his diagnosis of human nature is partial. He has read only half its testimony. He emphasizes dependence, to the neglect of obligation. He has interrogated the emotions, but not the conscience. He sees the universal restlessness and weakness of man more vividly than he does his universal and wilful wickedness. He does not apprehend the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The majesty of the moral law does not receive adequate recognition at his hands. The dependence of man is at once constitutional and moral; in its highest form it is the equivalent of duty. And duty implies the opposite of weakness. It proclaims man's dignity and unqualified personal responsibility for his moral state; "I ought" means "I can, if I will," and that makes the will in man the target of moral assault

and appeal. The evolutional or devotional theory of preaching overlooks these stern facts, and cannot therefore be accepted as defining the preacher's vocation.

Shall we combine the two? Shall we say that preaching should be both evangelistic and educational, that it should aim at conversion and edification? That would seem to be the natural conclusion, and it is the theory upon which many preachers act. They divide their audiences into saints and sinners. They address one class in the morning, and the second class in the evening; and if the evening is stormy, the saints get what was intended for the sinners. Or, the sermon ends with a twofold application, one to believers, and the other to the unregenerate. Such a method cannot fail to produce mental confusion and distraction. The audience is not treated as a unit, and no one hearer gets the full force of the message. And, yet, this is unavoidable, if the preacher construes his vocation as involving, first, the elimination, through the proclamation of the Gospel, from the mass of mankind, of those who are chosen unto eternal life; and second, the training of Christian believers in doctrine, character,

and active service. No mortal man is competent to work along these parallel lines with equal and balanced effectiveness. He will inevitably gravitate to one extreme, or the other, adopting either the hortatory or the didactic as his ordinary and favorite tone, unless he can combine the two in some higher and inclusive method. It is evident, too, that under such a working theory, the pulpit must be content with a comparatively narrow and restricted field. It is debarred, by its own act, from influencing public opinion and life at a thousand vital points, bringing upon it the charge of indifference to present and practical evils, through its absorption in the invisible and the future. A double, or twofold theory of preaching discredits itself; for unity is the test of philosophical analysis; and a theory which makes preaching a separating or sifting agency, intent upon the enlargement and edification of the Christian Church, surrenders the universality of its outlook, and proclaims itself to be simply an instrument of ecclesiastical proselytism. And for myself, I want both unity in the philosophy, and universality in the outlook.

II.

In the preceding lecture the question was raised: What is the ultimate aim of preaching, the single and comprehensive practical purpose which the preacher should have in mind, in all his studies, in the preparation and in the delivery of every sermon? Sermons have been divided into textual and topical; into expository, doctrinal, experimental, and practical; into hortatory and didactic; but these divisions are in order only when the germinal idea of the sermon has been clearly thrown into conscious relief. There is something in the true sermon which distinguishes it from every other form of public speech. Nor is that distinction due simply to the contents. The form is hardly less important than the matter, and form is largely determined by the presence or the absence of deliberate intention. Each sermon will

have its specific intention, but all the sermons of a year, and of a lifetime, are properly an orderly and progressive unity; in which, to use the phraseology of Herbert Spencer, the integration keeps pace with the differentiation. The sermon has its definite place and purpose, and to these it should be held as rigidly as the planets are held by the force of gravity.

Nor does the preacher stand alone. He belongs to a great, living army, whose numbers must keep step together, and move along many widely separated lines, and by many different paths, towards a common goal. There is not one law for the metropolis, and another for the frontier settlement; one law for nominally Christian communions, and another for pagan populations. Consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or otherwise, the preaching of any age is a vital and vitalizing unity, a definite force designed, in the Divine plan, to produce a definite result.

The generations, too, are interlocked. There is such a thing as an integration of dispensations, an evolution of history, which is but another name for the march of God's redemptive thought. In this evolution and

march preaching has its appointed place; and though, for purposes of literary criticism, we may distinguish between modern, and mediæval, and apostolic, and prophetic, and ante-diluvian preaching, the classification must proceed upon a principle which introduces unity into the diversity. The preaching of Noah was very different from that of Paul, both in form and in substance, in point of time and range of thought; but so far as both preached, there must have been identity in the Divine intention. Preaching is like a wide-branching oak or elm, whose every twig and leaf are nourished and colored by the sap which flows from the tap-root. It is not a distinctively Christian agency. It had a remarkable history in the eighth and succeeding centuries before Christ, whose records are preserved for us in the prophetic books of the Scriptures, and whose mighty influence upon subsequent Jewish life is not even yet adequately understood. It was prominent and powerful in the days of Samuel, in whom again we discover only a revival of the spirit of Moses. The prophet was the true oracle of the theocracy; its initiating, conserving, guiding force. Not upon

Aaron, but upon Moses, rested the commonwealth of Israel. By the hands of a prophet the Decalogue was given, and by prophets the will of God was made known. Temple and sacrifice belonged to the vanishing form of the dispensation, but the prophet was master of a universal tongue, and his speech is as pungent and piercing as ever. Preaching has only become more frequent and widely diffused, with a larger store of truth at its command; but though the stream has deepened and widened, the pulse and push of the fountain-head remain unchanged. And if we want to know what the preacher's definite vocation is, we cannot afford to neglect inquiring into the philosophy of prophecy; for prophecy constitutes the vital bond between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. The priest has gone, the prophet remains; first in appearance, perpetual in his ministry.

Advancing, then, from negative criticism to positive statement, let me begin by saying that, in my judgment, no better and more helpful definition of the preacher's vocation has been given, in recent years, than the one to which the first incumbent of this lectureship gave expression, sup-

porting it by an appeal to the words of Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians. "*Reconstructed Manhood*," was the vivid phrase into which he packed his theory of the sermon; and if we may presume that he entertained no individualistic restriction, but had in mind a reconstructed humanity or human society, a redeemed race of mortal men and women on earth, the definition may be accepted as complete and comprehensive. It certainly supplies the preacher with something definite and tangible. It makes him deal with men as they are, as needing moral reconstruction, and it urges him to look for immediate and practical results in life and conduct. The Gospel becomes a living message to living men. Salvation means a present manhood after the ideal in Christ, through the instrumentality of Divine truth and by the agency of the Holy Spirit; not a boon to be secured at death. It is the man in his mortal body with whom the preacher wrestles, instead of fixing his thoughts upon the disembodied spirit. The heaven into which he urges men is the reign of righteousness on earth; the hell from which he would pluck them, as brands from the

burning, is the hell of greed and lust, of brutal passion and degraded life. He makes holiness urgent now and always. He insists upon an immediate and radical repentance, a change of conviction issuing in a new creation, whose order and beauty transfigure a prosaic and busy world. Eternity is to make time radiant by the triumph of righteousness in all lands. All powers of body and soul, all achievements of industry, learning and art, the life of home and the policies of nations, are to answer with joyful alacrity the touch of Christ's pierced hands.

Cicero said of Socrates that "he caused philosophy to descend from heaven to earth, to enter into the cities and homes of men," by his conception of wisdom as dealing with the principles and the practice of personal and political virtue. It was a great and fruitful revolution in the method and aim of speculative thought. And the theory of preaching which concentrates all its attention upon the reconstruction of human society, urging individual repentance and regeneration with a view to pervasive and universal moral rectitude, brings the pulpit into living

touch with all that concerns human weal. It answers the severe tests of unity and universality, without which no philosophy can establish its claim to truth. It has the same message for every man, in every age and in every clime. It invests the present life, and the march of history, with a significance which the probationary theory of our present existence does not, and cannot, give to it. It makes the ethical the real eternal; and bids us look for the golden streets, and the gates of pearl, and the walls of jasper, as the glory of a city which is to descend out of heaven, to become the capital of an earthly empire. It looks upon literature and art, upon commerce and government, as subject to the authority which it represents, and as destined to become its powerful allies. It claims all human life as its own, to be purified, sweetened, enlarged by its Divine ministry. It preaches the same old Gospel, but it makes the message intensely urgent and practical. It demands not only decision, but obedience, a faith whose fruit is abundant and precious. It does not sow here that it may reap hereafter. It wants to fill the garners of earth

to overflowing, that God may be honored and men may be blessed.

It is true that preaching has never been able wholly to ignore the importance of the present, earthly life, and has always insisted that true religion encourages and urges to true morality. But the emphasis has been oftener, and more generally, upon future destiny than upon present character. The old formula, that out of the Church there is no salvation, meant that the gates of heaven opened only at the bidding of the priest. And the Protestant tests of faith and repentance, or of an experimental knowledge of Christ's saving power, have been regarded in the same way, as evidences here of what their professors shall secure hereafter. Hence the charges and countercharges of Romanist and Protestant, that religion and morality, piety and purity, have been sundered or united by artificial bonds. Hence the charge so frequently made that popular and traditional Christianity makes virtuous conduct of no practical account, by its doctrines of priestly absolution or of saving faith; and that in this matter Luther is as great a sinner as Tetzel, as in either case it is the state after

death which absorbs attention. For myself, I must frankly confess that the grave charge has only too much truth in it; and that there is but little relief in urging that an assured hope of heaven cannot fail to make a man pure. The sad facts do not bear out the statement; for the greatest scandals have come from men who have been loudest in affirming the assurance of salvation; and besides, it does not, to say the least, seem to be a very high morality which cultivates decency in behavior under the pressure of future reward. There is certainly much to commend a theory of the preacher's vocation, which compels an emphasis upon present character, and which deals with the hereafter only incidentally and by implication. I am not sure but it would be wise to give to the doctrine of an earthly probation a different theological turn; so that, instead of saying that every man's eternal destiny is determined at death, we should affirm that the preacher's vocation deals directly only with the life on this side of the grave. Let him do his utmost to make the life of God, and the grace of Jesus Christ, real in the men and women to whom he speaks and among

whom he lives, and he may encourage them to be fearless of that future whose secrets are pierced only by the eyes of omniscience. It may seem as if the idea of reconstructed manhood, or of a redeemed human society on earth, is a serious narrowing of the preacher's vocation, but it has the advantage of a clearly outlined task, in whose performance he touches all men in the use of all their faculties. And if it should appear that this conception pervades the Scriptures, and constitutes the unvarying undertone of its most impressive appeals, woven into its history, coloring alike its precepts and its promises, breathed in its prayers and its praises, stirring in its prophecies and pealing in its judgments, it will be the part of wisdom to bring ourselves into close and loving adjustment with the methods and aims of those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Now, the very structure of the Bible is such as to suggest that preaching was designed to be a historical agency for the moral training of the race, instead of a means for the determination of personal, eternal destiny. Upon the latter assump-

tion, the long delay in the advent of Christ, and the acknowledged imperfection of all preceding revelation, constitute a most serious embarrassment in any attempted vindication of the impartial justice and love of God. It may be defended on the plea of the Divine sovereignty, as unconditional and inscrutable; but such a logical procedure is too summary for Christian intelligence. I am not surprised that modern theodicies, starting with the assumption that the Gospel is to be preached among all nations in order that the elect may be gathered into heaven, are pushed to the conclusion that the gracious proclamation must be continued through the intermediate state, in order that every soul may have its equal and full opportunity for intelligent and deliberate action. The vice in the logic is in the major premise, for which I have failed to find any support in the Word of God. Preaching appears, throughout the inspired pages, as a historical agency, widening in its scope, increasing in the intensity of its power, accumulating its stores of truth, designed and fitted to produce a historical result.

The Bible is the most living of all books.

Every chapter and paragraph, every psalm and prayer and prophecy, bears the birth-mark of some great and earnest soul. It is the fragmentary record of sixteen centuries, more correctly of forty-one centuries of Divine education; starting with the promise of the serpent-bruiser, and crowned by the sublime Gospel from the pen of John. If its creation was a vital, historical evolution, what can its mission be, now that it is winged and fully equipped for its task, but a historical leavening of the life of humanity which shall be commensurate with the long story of its production? An instrument which was forged and shaped in the fires and on the anvils of four thousand years, while cities were built, and wars were waged, and empires vanished, and great literatures were created, all of them meanwhile preparing the opportunity of its use, and opening a path for the display of its power, must have for its immediate aim a subjugation and transfiguration of terrestrial life, whose sublime grandeur no fancy can sketch, and which can find expression only in the extraordinary imagery of the Apocalypse. The dream of Babylon's famous king is involuntarily recalled, where

the huge image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay, representing the march of political history, is smitten by the stone, hurled of unseen hands, grinding the image into powder, and covering the whole earth. Such an issue, the universal reign of righteousness on earth, makes luminous the long and severe educational process which culminated in the advent of Jesus Christ, and in the apostolic ministry.

A second corroborative proof that preaching is a divinely appointed agency for the accomplishment of a historical result, is found in the comparative silence of Holy Scripture on the life beyond the grave. I say comparative silence, because personal immortality is involved, by necessary implication, in its doctrine of what God is, and in its description of His relation to man as created in His image, and summoned to intimate and confidential fellowship with Him. But the future life is not the great burden of its revelation. There is no explicit affirmation of it in the Pentateuch. Only once does its hope burst from the lips of Job, and even then the meaning of his words is not perfectly clear. In the loftiest psalms it finds only vague expression.

The prophets maintain the same strange reserve. All through the Old Testament, Hades is the underworld shrouded in impenetrable gloom; and the disembodied state is not regarded as an abode of rest, nor as the transfer to a higher sphere. Not until we reach the New Testament and read the story of our Lord's resurrection do we come to clear visions of the future. The gloom vanishes; the ancient silent faith speaks out in jubilant tones, that to have died and so to be with Christ is far better. But even here the revelation is scanty, and leaves a thousand questions unanswered. Uninterrupted personal identity, and an advance in blessedness, we may confidently affirm for all who die in the Lord; but even for them there is something lacking until Christ shall come at the end of the world; while the state of the impenitent dead is veiled in startling imagery, whose exact import we cannot determine.

There is certainly something very suggestive and impressive in this silence and in these scanty references. If they do not form the staple of revelation, they certainly cannot properly be the burden of our preaching. The field surveyed is the earth, human

life in its present moral conditions, capacities, and obligations. It is altogether an inadequate statement of the case to say that the Bible represents the present earthly life as the only period of moral probation. It does more than that. It deals with the future life only by indirection, as a corollary or implication at most, while the pervading or overshadowing emphasis is on the life that now is. The Old Testament thought moves, almost exclusively, within the limits of temporal rewards and punishments, the present blessedness of the man of God, and the shame which shall surely come over the wicked; while in the New Testament precept and promise bear a preponderant relation to present godliness. Our current methods invert all this. We labor for revivals, we pray for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we urge men to come to Christ, with our thoughts fixed upon the grave, and upon the word of hope that may be spoken over the man when he is gone. We believe that this world is a lost world, and yet its condemnation and ruin are practically viewed as in suspense, prospective calamities to be avoided and escaped by fleeing to Christ as the appointed refuge

from the coming wrath. And so we teach and sing:

> "While the lamp holds out to burn,
> The vilest sinner may return."

We do not mean to place a premium upon deathbed repentances, we do not mean to encourage dissoluteness of life; but the moral imperative, demanding immediate and obedient recognition, is shorn of its majestic might by the undertone of an appeal to prudential motives. Salvation is made an affair of commercial barter, where men pay a certain price and secure a future gain. If prudential considerations must play a part in securing repentance, ought we not to adopt the prophetic and apostolic method, in which the judgment of God is represented as in actual and fearful execution upon all who repress the truth in unrighteousness? It is a personal, earthly, historical judgment which Paul so tersely outlines in his first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The current pagan life, with its universal license, with its unnatural crimes, with its degradation of the home, with its political cruelty, lawlessness, and insecurity, was a revelation

of the Divine indignation, whose righteous fury would smite men more and more severely, unless they repented and ceased doing evil. The epistles are full of the homeliest instructions and appeals, many of which are disguised in our translation, and which we should hardly dare to reproduce in their original plainness, all of them bearing upon the necessity of an immediate and radical change in the existing life. The universal emphasis is on present character and condition, and a revival of biblical preaching must deal boldly, almost exclusively, with the mortal life of men. Sin brings present disgrace and ruin to body and soul, to home and country; it breeds distrust, it enervates manhood and womanhood, it incites to murderous revenge, it arrays class against class, it kindles the volcanic fire of social hate, it is a menace to domestic peace, to social order, and to international amity; and from all this there is salvation only by that personal integrity and social righteousness which are the free gift of God to men by faith in Jesus Christ. Is not that the burden of Old Testament prophecy? Is it not the kernel of the Pauline logic, when by

an argument purely historical in his great epistle, he shows that the Gospel alone is competent to do what the wisdom of the Greek, and the law of Moses, had failed to accomplish? The pierced hands alone can rescue the world out of that abyss of woe into whose fathomless depths sin is hurling it with an ever accelerated velocity. Here is your task and mine, as it was that of prophets and apostles before us, to make this earth the abode of purity and the paradise of God.

Look once more into your Bibles, and note that central phrase around which all its practical admonitions cluster and revolve, as planets around the sun. In the earliest biography of our Lord's life and ministry, we are told that Jesus "came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel." What was the Gospel? It was the glad tidings that "the kingdom of God" was at hand; and men were urged to change their minds and believe the announcement. They were summoned to abandon their dream of political rule, and to accept citizenship in that

moral empire, whose laws He expounded, and of which He claimed to be King. That was the burden of His personal ministry, as it had been that of His forerunner. Around that conception of a Divine kingdom, Matthew weaves the materials of his Gospel. Christ is a King, the Founder of a new and universal theocracy. The Sermon on the Mount holds the same place in Matthew's sketch, which the book of the law has in the Pentateuch. It expounds the conditions and the duties of citizenship in the new commonwealth. The parables illustrate its nature, its purifying power, its expanding energy, and its sifting processes. The forty days between the resurrection and the ascension were devoted to instructions "pertaining to the kingdom of God," and the book of Acts ends with the statement that Paul, upon his arrival at Rome, gathered the chief of the Jews together, and expounded to them, by an appeal to Moses and the prophets, the doctrine of Christ, and of "the kingdom of God."

It was not a new phrase upon the lips of the Baptist; it had been the watchword of patience, and of hope, through many weary centuries. It was the keynote of prophetic

warning and encouragement, and it meant the rule of God in all the earth, the house of the Lord becoming the resort of worship for all nations. The blessing of the covenant was to be the heritage of all races and lands. Against the carnal and political methods by which that sovereignty was hoped to be secured, our Lord most earnestly protested; but he mustered his disciples under the same banner, and summoned them to the same work, when He taught them to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," petitions which are also promises and prophecies. And hence it was that the apostolic emphasis, in preaching and in epistle, was ever upon the return of Jesus Christ in power and in glory. It was not death, but the second advent, upon which the disciples fixed their gaze. They were busy preparing the way for the King, watching for Him with trimmed and burning lamps. They were understood by many to teach that the final coming was near at hand, and the Church fell into chiliastic dreams, from which she was rudely awakened by the barbarian invasion and the fall of Rome. That opened for her the path to a new

dominion, and inspired her with the ambition of universal empire, in securing and consolidating which she freely employed the methods of political intrigue, and the agency of the sword. She grasped the crown, and burnt her preachers. Luther's hammer wrecked the ambitious project, and the last remnants of ecclesiastical despotism are vanishing. The Pope is a prisoner in his own palace, a stranger in his own city, and at any moment he may be an involuntary exile. Rome's idea of the kingdom of God has proved to be as baseless as the earlier fancies. And yet, that kingdom is the practical theme of revelation, the keynote of all dispensations. It is not of the world, and yet it is to conquer the world. It is not to come with observation, heralded by startling phenomena, shaking thrones and convulsing nations, and yet its advent is to be with irresistible might. It is righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. That is the advent upon which the gaze of every disciple is to be fixed, and whose hastening should enlist the preacher's zeal.

In a word, *the historical triumph of Christianity* is the immediate and practical result

designed to be attained by the preaching of the Gospel. We make the world's evangelization, the discipling of all nations, incidental and subordinate; it is, in reality, supreme and exclusive. The present prosaic earth is the territory which we are summoned to subdue to the obedience of Jesus Christ. Here, where sin threw down the gauge of battle and made man an exile from Paradise, the conflict is to be fought out to its bitter end, until Eden comes back with a fairer and a perennial beauty. What socialism blindly aims at through revolutionary and anarchial measures, Christianity is fitted and destined to accomplish for man. The cry of the poor is to be answered. Every burden is to be loosed, every yoke of oppression is to be broken. Ignorance is to be supplanted by the wisdom whose beginning is the fear of the Lord. Drunkenness is to be exterminated, and Sabbath desecration is to cease. The monster of lust is to be cast into the bottomless pit. The meek are to inherit the earth. The idolatries and cruelties of Paganism are to be swept away. And all this is to be done, not by repressive and punitive legislation, but by the expansive and con-

quering energy of the Holy Spirit, entering into individual souls, through faith in Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Gospel. That is only a means to an end, an episode in a larger history. Beyond it lie the day of judgment and the eternal years, with their unfolding story which God has reserved to Himself. The philosophy of mortal history is all that has been disclosed to us, and that we have been slow to master. We have been more curious than consecrated. Whatever mighty results the volume of the future may contain, the introductory chapter concerns the present conquest of humanity to righteousness, until the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, and the lion and the lamb shall lie down in peace together. Earth is the battle ground of the eternities, and moral forces are to determine the issue of the encounter.

This conception makes the Christian pulpit a living, burning, perpetual need. The vocation of the preacher is seen to stand in organic relation to the development of human history. He blazes the way to the appointed goal, and marshals the growing and victorious battalions along

the widening highway. This is the vision of prophets and apostles, of Daniel in idolatrous Babylon, and of John in the isle of Patmos. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdom of our God, and of His Christ, and He is to reign forever and ever. It requires no ordinary faith to believe this. It demands no ordinary courage to confess it in the face of doubt and denial. It seems chimerical. The pessimistic estimate of the world's future is more congenial to the reigning temper. It is so much easier to wait for a catastrophe, than to convert the world by the foolishness of preaching. We get weary of the strain, and long for the descending fire, the advent of our Lord. But He is here. His banners are unfurled, and He bids us smite with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This, then, I conceive to be the Scriptural theory of the Christian preacher's vocation, the Divine philosophy of his commission, *the reconstruction of humanity, the historical triumph of Christianity in all the earth.*

I am aware that such an interpretation of the final cause of preaching will seem, at first inspection, to divest it of any special Divine significance, and to reduce it to a

very ordinary agency for securing moral improvement. The peculiar idea of redemption seems to be eliminated, and the immortality of the soul appears to be reduced to an inference, which might as well be explicitly ignored. But neither of these inferences is logically involved in the doctrine here propounded and defended. The matter of preaching remains exactly the same, in its essential basis, and in the logical order of its separate doctrines. The supernatural revelation of God for the redemption of man, culminating in the person and mediation of our Lord, and continued through the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit, is assumed and most earnestly maintained. The profound biblical conceptions of sin, and law, and atonement, and regeneration, are not divested of their supernatural import, and relegated to the vocabulary of natural ethics. I am not pleading for another Gospel, nor for a new and attenuated version of the old Gospel, but for such a use of it as shall deal with man as he is, and shall secure his present redemption from the power and pollution of sin. Use the same rifle, powder, and ball, but aim low. I have no confidence in the

preaching which confines itself to the exposition of ethical maxims, which urges men to avoid falsehood and vice on the ground of the constitutional dignity of human nature, which does not introduce the motives growing out of a veritable Divine intervention, and which ignores the sanctions of the Divine judgment; for upon such a view, Socrates and Confucius are older, and so far, better authorities than Jesus Christ. For all literature has its tragic undertone, and the altar is everywhere the confession of sin, and a memorial of fear. Man needs Divine redemption. Something must be done for him. Humanity must be rescued by the hand of God, as well as startled by His voice and welcomed to His heart. It must be born from above. Its prison doors must be broken, its manacles must be melted, the tide of death must be checked and reversed in the prisoner's veins. Reformation will not answer; it only administers anodynes, whose only effect is to retard for a season the inevitable collapse. Socrates did not save Greece; the Stoics did not save Rome; Confucius and Sakya-Mouni have not saved China and India. Ethical injunctions will

not save man; the experiment has been widely tried, and it has always been a sad and conspicuous failure. Humanity needs a Redeemer, an historical and personal descent of the living God into the stream of its poisoned life, if that life is to be cleansed and sweetened. And this is the burden of the Gospel, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. That was more than a republication of the moral law. It was more than the revelation of God's universal Fatherhood. Love wins and conquers by what it does, not by what it says, and the glad tidings of the New Testament are in what Jesus Christ did for men, and in the abiding energy of that work. The pierced hands are no myth, the broken heart is no accident, the open grave is no poetic fancy. They reveal much; they have achieved, and are achieving more. The air is not more indispensable to physical life than is Jesus Christ to man's redemption. My aim has been to set forth the tremendous realism of the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ, its profound historical necessity, and its design as a historical fact, to produce a definite historical result, — the redemption of man.

Nor, under this conception of the preacher's vocation, is man to be treated as the creature of time. That would be an irrational procedure, for the simple reason that man's spirit bears the image of God, and is therefore immortal in its essential constitution. You must address him as the child and heir of eternity; only you need to remember that the eternity which thus crowns him is not prospective merely, but present. All that he does and is has eternal significance. It is unending in duration of effect, because it is eternal in present quality. It is an unscriptural distinction which limits time to the present and eternity to the future. The present moment is all that has reality, and time and eternity are only different faces of the NOW. "The things that are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal," says the great apostle. And everywhere, at every moment, the seen and the unseen confront us. They meet in our composite personality; the visible body is temporal, the invisible soul is eternal. They balance and interpenetrate each other in what we call the universe; so far as it is visible, it is temporal and changing, but its invisible energy, as rooted

in the will of the Living God, is immutable, constant, eternal. That is the Pauline distinction, and it embodies the profoundest philosophy. He does not say that the visible is unreal, nor does he say that the invisible is ideal; he is neither an idealist nor a materialist. The visible and the invisible are equally real; Paul speaks as a natural dualist. But the invisible is the root of the visible. It is the immutable, constant, eternal principle of the changing and transient. Wherever the invisible is, there is the eternal: and if there be an omnipresent, invisible God, eternity is condensed into every flying minute. Every conscious, responsible soul holds the awful secret in its grasp. In virtue of its constitutional relationship to God, and in virtue of its natural sonship, its present attitude and action are invested with eternal significance. Immortality is not eliminated, but it is traced to its living root, in the invisible spirit, and eternity shows its majestic face behind the thin veil of time.

The truth is that our philosophy of mortal life has been altogether too meagre. Our estimate of history has been singularly inadequate. We have been disposed to

regard the present life as full only of vanity, as indeed it is to him who uses it mainly for eating, drinking, getting rich and being merry. We have rattled the skeleton in men's faces. We have taken our practical theology from Ecclesiastes, instead of from the Gospel of John. But *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation. The air is full of sunshine and song. The last days are upon us, in which God has spoken to us by His Son, and set up His tabernacle among men. The future has no dignity which does not fill each passing hour, and eternity is the pulse, the throbbing heart, of time. And, therefore, the present life is not a temporary scaffolding, a period of moral probation, but the deep and broad foundation which God is laying by human hands for the temple of His building; and the history, slowly syllabling itself in the world's redemption, is the first and formative chapter in the glorious records of the future. Present life and present history are eternal, of intrinsic and imperishable worth. To save men, then, in their mortal bodies, and to subdue the earth unto righteousness, through the preaching of the Gospel, is to give to

eternity its living place in the annals of time.

For more than ten years I have rested in this conclusion, and each review has only confirmed my confidence in its correctness. It has given me poise and gladness amid the eschatological discussions which have disturbed our theological schools, and which have marred the peace of our missionary gatherings. I have felt that I had other work to do than to frame theories as to how God would deal with those who have never heard the Gospel. I do not know what He will do with those who hear the Gospel from my lips. The rejection of my message may not involve their eternal perdition. I am not the organ of God's retributive justice, and I would not be for ten thousand worlds. The intermediate state is a *terra incognita*, on which I have ceased to speculate, simply because human reason is incompetent to conduct the debate to any certain issue, and because the Scriptures have not been made the vehicle of any revelation on the subject. The dead are in God's hands, where we should be both content and glad to leave them; the living millions are on your

hands and mine, and they should burden our hearts. Surely, on this ground we can clasp hands, and push to the utmost the energies of Christian activity, until their widening lines shall compass all the nations. Until then, the Christian pulpit must remain as the mightiest of conservative moral forces, and as the most potent of all aggressive regenerating agencies.

It seems to me that this theory of preaching unites the evangelistic and evolutional conceptions in a higher, single, comprehensive formula. It agrees with the evangelistic in recognizing this world as a lost world, as dead in trespasses and sins, as exposed to imminent and eternal judgment, as summoned in these last days to immediate repentance, and requiring that renewing and sanctifying energy of the Holy Spirit, which is connected with an obedient faith in the Gospel, for its rescue. It does not ignore the individual in the universality of its outlook. It accentuates personal responsibility. It paints sin in the darkest colors. It maintains the majesty of moral law. It knows only Christ and Him crucified, as the sinner's hope of pardon and purity. It addresses each man as an im-

mortal being, and invests every moral choice with eternal significance. It does not soothe with unfounded hopes. It urges to immediate and decided action. On the other hand, it agrees with the evolutional or educational theory of the sermon by recognizing that the Incarnation was a historical crisis, that the Resurrection was a historical victory, and that the Mediatorial Reign of Jesus Christ is a historical process. The present life of man is to be sanctified and sweetened, and the whole earth is to be made the abode of piety and peace. That eternal issues are involved in the process, no thoughtful man, who reverently reads his Bible, can for a moment doubt, and must be assumed on the ground of the soul's indestructible being and the absolute authority of moral law; nor can these considerations be eliminated from the message which the pulpit must deliver; but the immediate object of attainment must be the present conversion of men to holiness of life, by faith in Jesus Christ. This will give living unity to the sermon, and cannot fail to impress the preacher with a profound conviction of the historical necessity and importance of his vocation.

THE PERSONAL ELEMENT IN PREACHING.

"KNOW THYSELF," was the short, pithy sentence into which the best Greek thought compressed its practical wisdom. This constitutes the problem of a sound philosophy, and it is indispensable to genuine oratorical power. For it is not the word which holds the subtle, conquering energy, but the thought which the word aims to carry, and thought comes with its mightiest force only when the soul is stirred to its profoundest depths, is roused in the compass of all its powers, and thrusts itself forward with eager and hastening step. Language is only the vehicle of thought, and thought is the mind in conscious action. If words are to burn their way, thought must be at white heat, and the soul must be on fire. We preach to persuade men, and the secret of persuasion is

the impact of soul upon soul, in which obscurity is overcome by clearness, and doubt by faith, and narrowness by breadth, and fancies by facts, and partiality by comprehension, and hesitation by decision. As a rule, audiences are more responsive than sympathetic. Often they are cold and critical, if not positively hostile. When at their best, they wait to be moved, and they can be powerfully and permanently moved only by words that convey strong personal conviction, and provoke an instant affirmative response. Whether we like it or not, whether we justify the attitude, or condemn it, the hearer need not be expected to surrender in advance. Preaching is always an athletic contest, a close grappling and serious wrestle, and whether the result shall be conquest, or defeat, or a drawn battle, will depend upon the perfect command the preacher has of his thoughts and of himself. The sword must grow to his hands, must be double-edged, and he must be master in its use. The soul in you must make the souls of your hearers captive. You must speak with authority; not the authority of self-conceit, nor that of paraded learning, nor

that of ecclesiastical decisions, but the authority which accompanies personal certitude.

This is the only personal element which has any legitimate place in the theory of preaching, and without it preaching is emptied of its persuasive power. All else is subsidiary and incidental, peculiar to the individual, whether the peculiarity be physical, or mental, or rhetorical. Individuality and personality are not equivalents in meaning. The individual is the limited, the partial, the changing; the personal is the essential, the inclusive, the permanent. It is the fixed, intelligent certitude of soul, rooted in that knowledge of self which is the outcome of a personal testing of Divine truth, which constitutes the unfailing and inexhaustible source of moral power in the preacher. The Gospel must be in him, a well of water springing into everlasting life, untouched by drought or frost, refreshing his own spirit, and quenching the thirst of others. If any of you entertain the notion that anything can be a substitute for this, a ministry of ten years will strip you of the illusion.

I want to make a threefold application

of this principle: first, to the physical condition of the preacher; then, to his devotional temper; and finally, to his rhetorical culture.

Our age is an age of physical culture. The gymnasium crowds hard upon the lecture-room. Muscle enters into competition with scholarship in our halls of learning. Within certain limits the tendency is a sound and healthy one. For the intelligent care of the body is a religious duty; and conscientiousness is sadly deficient when it permits the habitual disregard of hygienic laws. Sickliness is not an evidence of saintliness; a pale face is not prima facie evidence of power; and a sturdy, vigorous frame is not the sign of animalism. But there is need of remembering that the body is not the measure of the soul, that insignificance and weakness may hide in a giant frame, and exceptional force may dwell in a frail body. This needs no proof. You will recall Bernard and Calvin and Kant and Paul. We have all seen men of imposing presence, for whom our reverence vanished as soon as they opened their lips; while others bound us to them as by links of steel, whose phys-

ical insignificance provoked our laughter or compassion. Even the ancient proverb of a sound mind in a sound body needs serious qualification; for history abounds in instances of men whose mental sanity and moral power have suffered no appreciable hindrance from constitutional and physical infirmities. There is danger here, as everywhere else, of hasty generalization, from a partial induction of facts. The truth is more nearly this, that thoroughgoing rectitude involves reverence for all law, physical or moral, human or Divine. There is a sense in which all law is moral and Divine, universally and eternally obligatory, ignorance of which is blamable, and violation of which is sin. It is your business to understand your body, as much as it is your business to understand your soul. It is as much your duty to watch over and care for your body, as it is to save your soul. Christ came to redeem them both, and you may not do less than fall into line with Him.

Here I place the emphasis, upon an intelligent, conscientious, reverent care of the body, not upon its native vigor, least of all upon the magnitude of its proportions.

You are not responsible for either height or weight. You cannot add to your stature. You cannot change the color of your eyes or hair. And some of you will have a perpetual contest with inherited and constitutional infirmities. There is one thing you can do, are morally bound to do, have an intelligent care for the body which is yours. You can put your personal integrity into your mortal flesh. You can pay the debt which, under God, you owe to brain, and lungs, and stomach. You can eat, drink, and sleep, to the glory of God. Don't discount these bills. Pay them promptly, gladly; and pay a hundred cents on a dollar. You will not understand me to advocate self-indulgence; but such an intelligent oversight as the owner of horses would give to the animals in his stables. It is the moral element in physical culture which is of universal obligation; and it is here that the principle applies that he only who is faithful in the least can be faithful in the highest. Conscientiousness admits of no exceptions. Financial honesty is a matter of pennies. Veracity does not permit lying in little things. Art does not disdain exactness in trifles. And it is, in

the very nature of things, impossible for a man to treat his body with systematic negligence or disregard, without suffering in mental sanity and moral power. The whole history of asceticism proves this. Fastings, and vigils, and flagellations unhinged the mind, filling it with vagaries and dreams, sapping its normal strength, and undermining its moral power. The personal integrity, therefore, the stern and habitual fidelity to self, which is the secret of moral energy, must extend its sovereignty over the province of the body, and guard it from needless waste.

What I have said about the care of the body is also true of style, and of all those minor proprieties which have to do with the conduct of public worship. Genuineness and simple heartiness are the charm of all speech, the beauty of all services. The Christian preacher should be a gentleman: that is, a man who is moved by a genuine respect for all that is, and who is so true that he cannot treat sacred things with levity, nor conduct the worship of God in a slovenly manner. Many years ago, in my church, I had a blunt old Irishman. He was a diamond in the rough. He was

very poor, but not a beggar. He was uneducated, but he knew his Bible. He was without polish, ignorant of social etiquette, but he was the soul of courtesy and politeness, unassuming and catholic. He told me once that he always put on his coat before he conducted family prayers. It was a little thing, but it meant a great deal. I do not suppose that it would have been a sin for him to pray in his shirt sleeves; but he felt that God was entitled to the same forms of respectful approach which he would have scrupulously observed in calling upon his friends. He was simply true to the inherent fitness of things, and that is the soul of courtesy and refinement.

Hence even the personal habits and dress of the minister are worthy of his attention. He has no business to be slovenly and vulgar. I recently listened to two distinguished scholars who occupy important chairs in the University of Berlin. One appeared in rusty garments and soiled linen, while he droned away in a lifeless fashion for nearly an hour. The sight roused in me an instinctive resentment. I felt that his appearance was an insult to his hearers, and that it betokened a want of self-respect,

however far these things may have been present to his conscious thought. They ought to have been present to him. There is an everlasting incongruity between great learning and dirty collars. The other man held an equally high rank in scholarship, but he was dressed in faultless taste. His neck was clean, his linen was immaculate. His beard was closely cropped and carefully brushed, his coat was closely buttoned. He was "a gentleman and a scholar." There was nothing foppish about him; he was simply a clean, wholesome man, who had a keen perception of the fitness of things. It was a pleasure to look at him, and he spoke as he looked, with freedom, exactness, and fiery animation.

Now, there is an artificial cultivation of manners. It infects the tone, the attitude, the dress. The elocution becomes pompous. The dress becomes prescribed and official. Mannerism is the worst of manners. When primary or undue attention is given to the form, the life suffers and shrivels. And yet, to be perfectly natural, observing always that outward decorum which befits the occasion, demands the severest and most unremitting self-disci-

pline. It requires the culture of the heart, until the spirit in you obtains such clearness of vision, such intensity of grasp, such an intuitive perception of what the occasion requires, such a fixed purpose to meet every emergency as it arises, that the proprieties will almost take care of themselves, as fragrance radiates from the rose and light from the sun. Keep the central fires burning. I know that my remedy is a severe and searching one, and I confess that it is easier to preach than to practise; but I confidently appeal to you whether I am not right. It is in the conduct of worship, as with godliness; you can have the form without the power, but you cannot have the power without its appropriate form, and where the power is perfect the form will be perfect. All beauty comes from life, and all vigorous life builds in lines of beauty.

There is, probably, no part of public worship and of pastoral duty which is so trying as that of prayer. At the bedside, at funerals, on the Lord's day, the prayer is the minister's most arduous service. He soon discovers that preparation is indispensable, unless a dead and dry formality

shall be permitted to eat out of him all elements of fresh and forcible devotion. But how shall he prepare himself? Shall he use regular forms, hallowed by antiquity, made precious by association, or shall he write out his prayers, and commit them to memory? Both methods have been recommended, and we cannot condemn them as wrong, so long as they give free flow to spiritual devotion. Much may be gained from the study of liturgies. The prayers composed by great and saintly men may give a deeper tone to our petitions, and a wider range to our supplicatory speech. Certainly the psalms cannot safely be neglected, and it may be well sometimes to make the pen the instrument of devotion, that golden apples may gleam in a framework of silver. But mechanism must be avoided. That is the death of devotion, and they who use written forms need evermore to pass them through the fiery crucible of personal brooding, until they glow and burn again. You must retreat within yourself. You must feel the burden of your own wants, your blindness, your weakness, your sin. You must make the sorrows of others your own, and see in the

dead face your own mother or babe. Then the tiniest hands will open the flood-gates of your sympathy. You must impersonate the throng, the aged, the mature, the young, hearts that are glad, and hearts that are crushed; men and women who are unmurmuring and patient, and others who are hard and rebellious; and then, with the vision of an omniscient and loving Father mastering your own soul, you will pray. It is a task from which we shrink; it involves a long retreat and a wide dispersion, a falling back upon the living centre of personal life, whence alone sympathy radiates into the universal and Divine; but when you have accomplished the arduous task, and the full stream of human want courses through your spirit, the coal of fire will lie upon your lips. Let us hear once more the words of the Master: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." That is the law of all prayer. Every man finds God where Augustine found him — within himself. Retreat then within yourself, and your prayer will bring the heavens near.

The secret of devotion is the secret of a

forcible style. There is a higher teacher than text-books on rhetoric and logic. You do well to master these, but if you let them master you, your most careful composition will lack the intensest vitality. You must have your own style and logic. And by that I do not mean such petty idiosyncrasies as some men assiduously cultivate, mistaking singularity for originality, but simple and thorough-going harmony between your thought and its form. Do not overlay it with factitious adornment. Too many jewels are offensive. Preach as you would talk to a friend on the theme of which you are full. Elevated thought will weave its own royal robes. Strong thought will always flash out in terse phrases. There is a mechanical and a vital use of language. It becomes a mechanical instrument when the primary attention is fixed upon words and phrases; and then it is no more than sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. It becomes a vital organ when the only care is that the thought shall have clear and pungent expression, and then it speeds to its mark like a bullet from a Minie-rifle. That which you elaborate within the inmost centre, and is then

clothed in the language which meanwhile has taken shape, will be remembered by you both in substance and form with the greatest ease, and will be uttered by you with all the energy of natural fervor. The failure of severely and systematically doing this explains, in my judgment, more than anything else, the difficulty which so many ministers experience in speaking without the use of manuscript. The sermon is thought out during the process of composition. It should have been thought out before a line was written. There is too wide a chasm between the thought and the language. The manuscript is too mechanical a product; it is not the free and natural utterance of the burning thought. The style is full of strain and labor, and, if the sermon so composed should be committed to memory, and then preached, everybody would detect the incongruity. Such sermons must be read, for a free style cannot be elaborate. You must preach as you think, and as you would speak, when your thought is at white heat. There are manuscript sermons which are composed in that way, under the rush of a kindled intelligence, and with the whole order of thought clearly

grasped in advance, and should such manuscripts be mislaid, the preacher would find but little trouble in reproducing the whole in free speech. The rule is a universal one, that he who is master of himself, whose thought assumes the form of profound, personal conviction, will find it comparatively easy to cultivate a clear and forcible utterance, and will escape the slavery which compels some men to clutch their paper as if in conscious danger of momentary shipwreck.

I think you will agree with me that the various recommendations given in treatises on homiletics, bearing on the personal element in preaching, may be reduced to this one: the clearness and certitude of self-knowledge. There must be no haziness. There must be no doubt. And then there is required the simple courage which is content to let the inner man have his way. In a word, be yourself. That is the easiest said and the hardest done. The real man in us all is overlaid with artificialities and traditionalisms, whose wrappings cling to us and hinder free movement, as did the bandages which fettered the risen Lazarus. It requires bravery, energy, and time to

tear them away. If within twenty years you have succeeded in becoming yourself, in clearly grasping your real thought, and clothing it in the forms of natural speech, you have done a great work. The ministry of pure law is always one of condemnation. The attempt to cultivate an external conformity to its precepts, keeps us forever in bondage. It is only when law becomes life, when the spirit itself is roused from its lethargy and comes into conscious possession of its indefeasible heritage, that the reign of liberty begins. Then the rules learned by rote, and received upon authority, enact themselves, and thought runs along the prescribed lines without friction. Logic, it has well been said, does not teach us how we ought to think, but how we do think. Its function is not legislative, but descriptive. Rhetoric does not teach us how we ought to speak, but how we do speak when we have something to say. Its function is not legislative, but descriptive. No man has mastered either logic or rhetoric until he has mastered himself; for logic only interprets the processes of clear thinking, and rhetoric is only the science of clear expression.

So then "*Know Thyself*" is the preacher's simple and comprehensive canon. And its simplicity constitutes its severity. It compels you to be a philosopher. It summons you to severe and incessant introspection. It forces you back upon the primitive deliverances of consciousness. It compels you to sift these, until only the purest wheat remains. Psychology and ethics are the handmaids of oratory. No preacher can afford to neglect these studies, not merely because they are the instruments of the severest mental discipline, but because they force him to understand himself, and to find within his own nature the eternal basis of certitude. Frederick W. Robertson read Plato and Aristotle for mental inspiration and equipment. This may seem a very severe diet, but roast beef makes blood and is better than ice cream and cake. The earnest attempt to find out what Kant is after in the Critique of Pure Reason, and the intelligent comparison of his assumptions and conclusions with the unvarnished testimony of your own consciousness, will help you more in preaching, than devouring a whole library of modern literature. We read too much, we

think too little. The first is easy, the second is hard. You may say that metaphysics are dull and make your head ache. That is inevitable; for if you want the best, you must pay the price. You complain that philosophy leads to nothing practical. It brings you face to face with yourself, and nothing is more supremely practical than that. You reply that the results are meagre at the best, and that they are often contradictory, if not incomprehensible and absurd. But bulk is not the measure of value, and he who seeks to know himself, digs in the deepest mines where the choicest treasures are stored. You insist that it is the preacher's business to know his Bible, and to interpret the mind of God; but it is in the primary and necessary deliverances of your rational and moral nature that the conviction of God's existence forces itself upon you; you can understand your Bible only in personal experience of its redemptive revelation; and you can know in certainty the mind of God only as that has mastered your own reason by its inherent rationality. When you transcend the bounds of personal conviction, your speech is empty and impotent.

You tell me that the preacher should be a student of human nature. It is a favorite phrase, and it is often said that ministers do not know men. So far as there is any truth in the charge, it is because the preacher does not know himself. The man in him has become a bandaged and dried-up mummy, and the remedy is in setting his own manhood at liberty. The knowledge of others comes primarily by the knowledge of self. Find out what you are; catalogue your own fears and hopes; survey the field of your own moral conflict; note carefully the force which any statement makes upon your own mind and heart; analyze the secret of that authority before which you lie prostrate in the dust; and you will know every other man. All men are like yourself; and in the clear study of that bit of human nature which you have and are, you will reach the science of humanity in its essential life. There need be no timidity here; utter yourself, and your words will command universal attention and acceptance.

It is equally clear that such a method imposes its restrictions. It is often said that we must have a theology which can

be preached. This is only another way of saying that theology has for us its necessary limitations, and that these limitations grow out of the relation between the preacher and his hearers. They must be persuaded, and to persuade them he must first himself be persuaded. He must speak of his own knowledge. The force of his appeal lies in the energy of his personal conviction. He is pre-eminently and exclusively a witness. He must be a seer. He must be rigid with himself in excluding speculation from his public utterances, courageously confessing ignorance where ignorance describes his real mental attitude. He must be bravely true to himself, and speak only that of which he is firmly convinced. It behooves him to master his own doubts first, before he thrusts them upon others. He must tear down only when he is fully prepared to build up. Do not feed your people on green apples. Wait until they are ripe. From the fierce and fiery conflict with doubt, no thoughtful man can be exempt. There will come days and weeks when the midnight and tempest are upon your soul, when you cry beneath heavens of brass. But even then you will

feel that you need a God, that the soul hungers after righteousness; that truth and holiness are priceless and binding, even if death ends all. Preach these things amid the enveloping blackness; be true to yourself even then, and your ministry will not be in vain. By and by the old faith will come back. You will not drift away from your mother's knees, where you first learned to pray; you will not lose the radiant vision of your Lord. Your path may lie through thick and tangled forests and over rocky steeps, but you will stand at last upon the lofty table-lands, kissed by the rays of an eternal noon. Remember, I pray you, the words of your Lord and mine: "*If any man wills to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine.*"

THE ETHICAL ELEMENT IN PREACHING.

I AM aware that the wording of my theme is calculated to arouse suspicion and distrust. For it is the fashion in some quarters to denounce ethical preaching, and the preaching of ethics. We are all warned that such a procedure is the open door into naturalism and rationalism. Everything here depends upon our definitions. If by naturalism we understand that temper and system of thought which excludes the supernatural and makes every man his own and only redeemer, then the preaching which starts with, and incessantly appeals to, the ethical testimony of human nature, riddles the naturalistic philosophy and leaves it without a line of defence. Bushnell was right when he made the soul of man the major premise in his argument for the supernatural. And that this was Paul's

method is clear from the single statement in which he gives us the method of his ministry, that he sought to commend himself to every man's conscience as in the sight of God. He made little use of external evidence. He did not trouble himself about the canon. He appealed to but one miracle, the miracle of our Lord's resurrection from the dead; and that was verified to him not solely by historical testimony, but by personal experience of the power of the risen Christ. He let his own soul speak, and the argument went straight home. No preaching ever was more natural, though it was supernatural in every fibre. The philosophy which eliminates the supernatural is hopelessly shattered in the court of every man's conscience. The denial of the living God involves discredit of the moral nature, whose ingrained sense of guilt and consciousness of weakness demand a pardoning and redeeming God. Hence, Tertullian speaks of the soul's testimony as naturally Christian; and Augustine describes the heart of man as restless until it found its rest in God. If our preaching is to be vital, and not mechanical, it must be fearlessly natural, grounded in

the conviction that the scheme of redemption is perfectly adapted to the needs of man, and fitted to evoke his intelligent and cordial response.

And what is meant by rationalism? He who takes the ground that the unaided reason of man is competent to fathom the depths of his own being, to explain the riddle of his own existence, to solve the problem of his own moral contradiction and unrest, cannot even convert himself to his creed, much less disciple others. Be it so, that we are only children, "crying in the night, and with no language but a cry," the cry is there; and in that cry, which nothing can stifle, the reason in man leaps over the boundaries of inductive logic. It falls back upon its primitive constitution as demanding a higher and an infallible tuition. We believe the Gospel, with its revelation of the impartial and infinite love of God, its assurance of free forgiveness, its promise of Divine help, and its disclosure of the life everlasting, to be an answer to that cry, breathing peace, courage, and undying hope into human hearts; and that makes it supremely rational. Here again we may learn from Paul. His author-

ity was frequently challenged. The high-church party of his day claimed that he was not an apostle, because he had never been a personal disciple of Christ; and the eleven had distinctly decided, when they proceeded to fill the vacancy created by the apostasy and suicide of Judas, that the lapsed bishopric could be held only by a man who belonged to the ranks of those who, from the baptism of John to the ascension, had followed Christ. They cast their lots, and solemnly ordained Matthias by the laying on of hands. We hear nothing more of him. He had the title; but the energy descended upon Saul of Tarsus, a man who never received apostolic ordination, though he did secure apostolic recognition at the Council of Jerusalem. Upon what did he base his claim to be regarded as the peer of James, John, and Peter, the pillars of the infant church? He declared that he, too, had seen the Lord. The miracles of an apostle had been wrought by him, and he could appeal to these as the credentials of his Divine commission. But he laid the primary emphasis upon the results of his preaching. He was of insignificant stature and

lacked many of the graces of oratory; but he could say that he had been mighty through God in pulling down strongholds, in casting down imaginations and every high thing which exalted itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. That describes his preaching. It was a mighty intellectual wrestle, before which every antagonist went down. It was not the logic of the schools, but it was that mightier logic which Sir William Hamilton said Dr. Guthrie possessed, in which there was but one step between the premise and the conclusion. There is generally the most of reason where there is the least of argument, where the speech compels every man to listen to the authority within. Let us not deceive ourselves. The preaching which subdued the Roman and the Greek, which vanquished the sword and the pen, the preaching of which Paul was the most eminent and successful representative, is the only preaching which can master and subdue the life of our day. It must be rational. It must make the thought of man captive. It must make the hearer

see that fidelity to self compels glad surrender to Jesus Christ.

There are some who make a distinction between the intellectual and the moral nature, between the understanding and the reason, on the basis of the Kantian philosophy. It has been a favorite and familiar thesis that the reason leads us only a little way, and then hands us over to the authority of faith. Reason shows the necessity of revelation and redemption, and must examine the credentials of a Divine messenger; but at that point reason must submit. It never has submitted, and it never will submit. It insists that the message, in all its parts and as an organic whole, shall be rational, shine in the radiance of self-evident truth. You cannot deal with the reason and neglect the conscience. The soul is a living unity, in whose conscious life the intellectual and the ethical elements perpetually blend. You can have no psychology which does not assume the veracity of consciousness; you can have no true thought which does not reverence each separate fact, and all the facts in their natural order and in their completeness. The ethical is the primary and inclusive

category of the understanding, and all true thinking is at heart an ethical process. Nor, on the other hand, can the moral nature act in severance from the intellectual. Every moral deliverance is an act of judgment, a consciously rational verdict. Thus the science of the soul is an organic, indissoluble unity, where the intellectual and the ethical elements constantly balance and interpenetrate each other; so that we may say that nothing is rational which is not right, and nothing is right which is not rational; while the relation between God and the soul is such that nothing can be rational and right for man which is not also rational and right for God, and nothing can be divinely rational and right for God which does not command the soul's prompt and cordial response. Men need only to be true to themselves, to have the truth of God master them. This does not make the human reason the seat of primary authority and infallible; but it does affirm the capacity of the reason in man to discern and verify the truth of Divine revelation. Otherwise, inspiration itself would be impossible and inconceivable; for in inspired men the

highest thoughts of God burn and glow in words and phrases that are full of the fire of personal rational conviction. And so the Bible continues to be the greatest of all books, because it lies nearest to the level of true human thought. Ethical preaching and the preaching of ethics do not, therefore, involve a lapse into naturalism or rationalism, as systems of thought which exclude the supernatural. They carry us resistlessly into the supernatural; nay, the ethical life moves and has its being in the supernatural. Man is already in the realm of the supernatural and needs no railway of logic to convey him to its edge.

But now, let me say further, that a sharp distinction must be made between ethical preaching and the preaching of ethics. The two are not synonymous. When you change the adjective into a noun, you radically change the conception. In the one case you define a certain quality of the preaching, its pervading and peculiar tone, without saying anything about its contents. In the other case you trace the boundaries of the subject matter of preaching. Ethical preaching is something very different from the preaching of ethics; at

least, in clear thinking, the two should not be confounded. I plead for the first, not for the second. It is the good news of redemption in Jesus Christ which we are to preach, not a code of theoretic and practical morals. There are a thousand questions in casuistry upon which the Bible does not touch, and upon which the preacher has no right to pronounce judgment. The Scriptures deal first of all with a succession of great redemptive acts, culminating in the Incarnation, Atonement, and Ascension; then with fundamental, self-evident, and universally authoritative principles of moral life; and with specific precepts only as these grow out of principles. The apostle Paul could not take up a collection for the poor in Jerusalem, without referring to the unspeakable gift of God in Jesus Christ. What men shall eat and drink, what raiment they shall wear, what houses they shall live in, what ticket they shall vote, what amusements and recreations they shall indulge in, it is not for the preacher to say. In these matters every man must stand and fall to his own master. The responsibility rests with him, and him alone, of making personal application

of the general principles of righteousness. He may not make a brute of himself; he may not ignore the claims of God and of his fellow-men; he may not bargain away the eternities for temporal advantage; you may and must summon him to integrity, honesty, chastity, charity; and the more you do this, the more impregnable will be your vantage-ground, the more authoritative will become your speech. But when you attempt to be a censor of private morals or a critic of public policy, however honest your intentions or commendable your motives, you will provoke dissent from every hearer whose good will it is worth while to retain. For you are to preach to *men*, whom you are to urge to thoughtful, personal independence, whose character is to be unfolded from the germ of personal integrity.

Even on the widest definition, the preacher is vastly more than a lecturer on ethics. For ethics, as a science, deals with the elucidation of principles of conduct and character on the basis of an inductive psychological analysis, and with the applications of these principles to present earthly relations. It cannot bring to

view the highest motives to repentance, such as are found in the love of God and the sacrifice of the Cross. It may command and rebuke, but it cannot create anew and comfort. Its message is legal, not evangelical, and you are summoned to speak of pardon and purity as made available for man by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. But while it is not your vocation to be a preacher of ethics, the ethical quality must be regnant in all your preaching, determining your own personal mental temper, controlling your interpretation of the Gospel, and giving definiteness of aim to your speech.

The temper of your own mind must be ethical. Moral rectitude is the first canon which you are to regard in the preparation of every sermon, in the selection of every text, in its interpretation, in the unfolding and application of its doctrine. The subtlest temptations of the preacher are along the lines of mental and spiritual demagogism. He is tempted to act the politician, to use unworthy means in order to secure laudable ends. He is in danger of playing with himself and with his message. It has been said of Chalmers that his most marked

quality was the white heat of his earnestness. His sentences were long and involved, his logic was circular and kaleidoscopic; but the repetition of his thought only made its transparent and glowing honesty all the more apparent; and while in rhetoric and logic the eminent Scotch preacher may not be your ideal, in the ethical loyalty of his mind he commands our admiration and is worthy of our imitation. Here is the primary root of personal power. It distinguished Knox and Calvin and Luther and Paul. Nowhere is it more marked than in the recorded discourses of our Lord, whose sublimity is in their simplicity, whose authority is in their radical integrity. We are never weary of insisting that the preacher must be a good man; that he must live out of the pulpit as he talks in it, and we do well. But we do not carry the ethical imperative far enough when we stop there; we must extend its authority over the subtlest, and most secret, mental and spiritual processes. The ethical temper of which I speak will prevent a man from making an unauthorized use of Scripture language, and will prompt him to commit his manuscript to the flames, if

at the eleventh hour he discovers that his interpretation is vicious or even doubtful. It will guard him against overstatement and undue emphasis, and make him jealous to maintain the natural perspective of truth. I heard a sermon some years since, of which a friend said to me: "It was excellent, but the first sentence was not true." The criticism was deserved. The preacher overshot the mark, and so threw away his opportunity at the outset. The introduction cannot be too severely simple and transparent. With equal naturalness should the theme grow out of the text. Infinitely better is it to do without a text than to twist it to your purpose. That is dishonest, and the noblest argument will be vitiated by it. Even on the rostrum of political debate sincerity conquers, and special pleading digs its own grave; in the pulpit, and when you venture to speak in the name of God, you can command a hearing for your cause only as you establish a reputation for intellectual sincerity.

It is this demand for ethical uprightness which has swept the Presbyterian churches, most conservative of all ecclesiastical bodies, into the revision controversy. The West-

minister Confession does not represent the living pulpit. Its phrases are repudiated; the logical order of its doctrines is rejected. Men feel that they have haggled long enough about substance of doctrine, a phrase which every man interprets to suit himself. They want a creed to which they can subscribe without mental reservations and unworthy subterfuges, and this great church will renew its youth when it shall have burst asunder these shackles. For orthodoxy is right thinking, and when a creed ceases to represent the sincere convictions of those who subscribe to it, the professed orthodoxy is the rankest kind of heresy, which neither wealth nor numbers can save from the contempt to which even the semblance of dishonesty is doomed.

But the ethical element must not only give tone to the preacher's habitual mental temper; it must determine his theological method as well. He deals with ethical verities, with God and the soul, with sin, law, grace, salvation, and judgment. These truths are ethical in their content and import, whatever may be the etymological origin of the words. They must be ethically interpreted.

The doctrine of an inspired Bible, for instance, in whatever form it may be stated, reposes at last upon the perception of an ethical fact. Reach it, if you will, by the path of authenticity and integrity of the documents, and thence by appeal to prophecy and miracle, your primary affirmation is that the writers were credible witnesses. They did not lie, and they could not have been deceived. That ethical affirmation is the bed-rock upon which the elaborate argument is based, and by which its every part is sustained. Or take the more usual method in contemporary dogmatics. You believe in the Bible because you believe Jesus Christ; and you believe Him because you believe in Him. Your confidence in what He says, is based upon your confidence in His personal integrity. His moral sanity and sincerity subdue you. You hardly think of the miracles; His ethical perfection and His spiritual elevation win your confidence, and make it easy for you to believe Him when He makes the most startling declarations about Himself and the future. You believe Him to be God because you have faith in Him as man. You believe in eternal retribution,

in heaven and hell, because He taught it. He holds you. To suggest that He ever lost his mental poise is to you blasphemy. Thus Christianity rests upon the perception of an ethical fact which no criticism has been able to invalidate; and the more closely you keep that fact in view, the more pungent and powerful will your preaching be. Let me urge you never to permit any conscious slacking in the tension of this profound ethical confidence in your Lord. Christianity is Christ.

The contents of Christian teaching demand a similar treatment. They are rightly understood, either as separate doctrines or as an articulated system, only when they are ethically interpreted. The letter killeth; only the spirit maketh alive, and a living theology is always in danger of being strangled by an excessive literalism, under whose pressure the ethical element vanishes. If we regard the Gospel in its widest aspect as the revelation of redemptive action in man's behalf, our construction of this action in the several forms of atonement, regeneration, faith, and repentance will depend upon our previous conception of what God is and what man is.

Grace, as unmerited favor, leads to sovereignty, the infinite freedom of the Divine nature; sin, as the transgression of law, implies the existence of definite relations between the offender and the judge. Or, to phrase it differently, the remedial system is imbedded in the moral system, and must be conformed thereto. What that moral system is, of which the Gospel is the crowning exposition, will depend upon our theological and anthropological postulates. Start with the absolute freedom of God, as the essential energy lying back of His nature, determining its contents and expression, resolving Him into causative will, and you are forced either into virtual pantheism, denying the existence and efficiency of second causes, or into a mechanical interpretation of moral government, where covenants and constitutions play their mysterious and bewildering parts. Power becomes the basis of authority, demanding blind submission, refusing a disclosure of its rational ground. Supralapsarianism completely eliminates the ethical element in the government of the world. Nor does it obtain its rightful place where one Divine attribute is made central, im-

posing its limitations upon all the rest, as in those systems where justice is declared to be necessary and love optional, where law is regarded as universal in its operation, while grace is limited to the elect. The gravest objection to such a construction is not that it perplexes and outrages the human sense of impartial treatment, but that it surrenders and shatters the eternal ethical unity of the Divine Being, introducing conflict and contradiction into His essential nature. Reverse the order by making love primary and regnant, reducing justice to a conglomerate of benevolence and wisdom, divesting it of its ideal and immutable sovereignty, and you are involved in the same inconsistency and contradiction. Grace reigns through righteousness. Holiness and love are coefficients in all Divine ethical action, whether in redemption or in judgment. The ethical unity, or eternal moral perfection, of God, is vastly more important for biblical theology than the unity of His essential Being.

If we turn to man as the subject of Divine rule, the ethical interpretation of his nature, relations, and responsibilities again demands sovereign recognition. No doctrine

of original sin, nor of imputation, nor of human inability can stand which presses figurative phrases into its support, which leaves unnoticed the numerous qualifying statements, and which contradicts the normal testimony of the moral consciousness. Responsibility and sovereign grace receive equal and balanced emphasis in the Scriptures. No theory of responsibility is biblical which makes man competent to save himself. No theory of grace is biblical which makes man passive in regeneration, supernaturally acted upon without his knowledge and election, irrespective of the moral temper of his personal life. Natural ability, fettered by utter moral impotence, will not cut the Gordian knot. Such ability is only a phrase, a misnomer, an utterly illusive possession. Moral law implies some form or degree of moral ability, however inadequate and partial that ability may be.

The bondage of the will is not its paralysis or extinction. There may be only a despairing cry, like that which escaped from Paul when he pictured the man in whom the Divine law had made its living authority felt; but there is life in a cry. I am not attempting to frame a science of

moral government; I am simply insisting that in such a science the procedure must be consistently and thoroughly ethical, preserving the ethical unity of the Divine nature, and doing no violence to the ethical nature of man. Neither responsibility nor grace may be reduced to a thing of mechanics. The Bible does not do that. It affirms both with equal boldness, with an utter absence of conscious contradiction; and, in its ever-blending homage to the behests of moral law, and the confession of moral weakness, in its language of mingled self-condemnation and appeal for mercy, the soul of man but repeats and confirms the speech of inspiration. Augustinianism and Pelagianism, Calvinism and Arminianism, have yet to meet, by converging lines, upon a common platform, where equal justice shall be done to God as moral sovereign, and to man as his moral subject. Responsibility involves ethical freedom; the Divine sovereignty is an ethical energy, in whose exercise all the moral perfections combine, and every soul is reached.

The whole of what we call moral law, or moral government, is included in our doctrine of what God is, and what man is.

There are only two ethical verities, God and the soul; all other phrases do but describe the personal relations between the two, and these personal relations are determined by the respective natures of the beings related. These beings are ethical, and hence their relations must be ethical. They are brought face to face, not joined by intermediary compacts. Moral law and moral government are not a *tertium quid*, having independent existence and authority. Moral law is simply the expression of the Divine judgment, and in that judgment His eternal ethical personality is voiced; and so moral law is in perfect correspondence with the ethical nature of man; moral government is simply the ethical energy of God's personal rule. We are in constant danger of being misled by the figurative quality of all language. Our rhetoric gets the best of our logic. Our imagination plays tricks with our reason. Popular phrases are converted into philosophy. We sharply rebuke men for speaking of evolution, natural selection, and the like, as if these made a creative and directing intelligence needless. We reply that a scientific phrase can do nothing,

that it can only indicate how a thing is done, that evolution implies an energy which evolves, and natural selection an energy which selects. But we do not take our own medicine. We talk of a moral system, of Divine covenants and constitutions, as if these were actual things, instead of being simply human phrases by which we attempt to define the eternal ethical relations between God and man. If I may speak for myself I would say that I can use all the verbal forms of every school of Christian theology; but at a certain point in my thinking, I drop them all, and I am conscious of only two things, — what God is, and what I am. These are the two fixed centres in the far-sweeping ellipse of Christian thought, and from them the whole field of moral truth must be surveyed. Perhaps you will be disposed to emphasize a Christocentric attitude, as Christ is both the visible embodiment of God and of man. For practical purposes there would be no difference between us; but I need only remind you that you cannot define the person of Christ until you have made clear to yourself what God is, and what man is, to make it plain that my statement only carries the matter

a step further back, and lays stress upon the primary, fundamental ethical conceptions which dominate the whole circle of theological thought. Every doctrine discloses, in the final analysis, these two elementary ethical conceptions, and in their light the doctrines must be interpreted, whether separately or in their rational completeness. Along the entire line of Christian exposition, from the idea of creation to that of the final judgment, the kernel of truth has been reached only when its ethical elements have been clearly apprehended and firmly grasped; and from this inner centre of mystery the return will be easy to the free use of all the varied imagery which has been consecrated in Christian speech.

Now, then, with soul erect and rifle charged, what shall be your aim? It is your vocation to beseech men to be reconciled to God, to give joyful credence to the message of free forgiveness in Christ, and to take the yoke of obedience to Him upon them. But to secure such a response, you must evoke from them the confession of personal guilt, and open their eyes to the glory of the Lord. They must see their

own sin, and they must see His righteousness. It is an ethical result which you are seeking to gain, and therefore your appeal must be to the ethical nature. In popular phrase, you must train your guns upon the conscience of the hearer. And what is conscience? The best definition of the word, closely following its etymological derivation, which I have ever seen, makes it the soul's power of passing judgment upon itself, upon its thoughts, motives, and actions, a universal, pervasive, judicial quality of its conscious life. It does not supply its own law. That makes its appeal to the reason, and is discerned by the reason, but when once the rational imperative has been heard, the soul instantly passes judgment upon itself in view of its conformity to the law which the moral reason has proclaimed. The appeal to the conscience, therefore, is simply a summons to the soul to exercise its highest ethical prerogative. It is only indirectly, and mediately, that you can convince any man. He must convict and convince himself. Hence illumination is represented as the primary function of the ministry of the Holy Spirit; while spiritual perception, and the moral

judgment following it, are the acts of the soul under the revelation of the truth. Personal responsibility requires no argument. The moral law is in need of no defence. The perfections of God are radiant in their own light. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ commend themselves to every honest and earnest hearer. These great themes are to be handled by you in the profound conviction that their authority cannot be impugned, with an urgency which will give the hearer no rest until he passes judgment upon himself, and shapes his course accordingly. This will not make your preaching hortatory. It is a good rule that the exhortation should be brief, with the force of solid argument behind it. In its direct form it may often be wise to omit it. Leave the truth to do its own work. Throw the man upon himself. If you have brought him face to face with God, you may retire. But to secure that should be your overmastering passion, so that the Divine presence may produce self-conviction, confession, penitence, faith. Never permit yourself to forget that to provoke men to self-judgment, in the sight of God, is your vocation, and should be the aim of

all your discourse; and if your preaching be directed to this ethical end, its eternal undertone, majestic and mighty, will be, "*Now is the day of salvation*," summoning to instant decision and prompt obedience.

THE BIBLICAL ELEMENT IN PREACHING.

You have been taught that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was distinguished by two things: the appeal to Holy Scripture in the settlement of all questions of Christian faith and conduct, and the conception of religion as justification by faith, as constituted and conserved by personal and spiritual acts, not by priestly and sacramental offices. These are, respectively, the formal and the material principles of Protestant Christianity. Of the two, the latter is by far the more radical and revolutionary, because the preliminary and precedent conception of religion becomes, consciously or unconsciously, a canon of criticism and interpretation. It gives us, whether we recognize it or not, an *imperium in imperio*, a Bible within a Bible, a single sovereign message dominating the whole course, and explaining all the contents, of

Divine revelation. This explains Luther's attitude towards the epistle by James. It was to him a letter of straw, because he could not find in it the Pauline conception of the Gospel. The judgment was not based upon a critical sifting of historical evidence, much less was the procedure rationalistic, as proceeding from a denial of the supernatural; it was simply applying his conception of the Gospel to each separate document, and determining its relative authority by the comparison. It is a dangerous principle in the hands of weak men, and easily leads into all manner of vagary; for it is not so much an intellectual judgment, as it is a spiritual intuition, through the experimental mastery which comes only by moral conflict, of that single message which constitutes the vital substance and form of the Bible. If Luther knew anything, he knew what it was to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ; and this made him alike independent of ecclesiastical tradition, and of a slavish interpretation of the mere letter. A nominal apostle had for him no more authority than the decree of a Pope.

After him and with the decadence of earnest spiritual life, the point of emphasis

shifted from the material to the formal principle, from the Gospel itself to the Bible which contains it in written form. Justification by faith became itself only a dogma, while the main contention concerned the authority of the Scriptures, and the ground upon which that authority reposed. Against the infallibility of councils and Popes was set the literal infallibility of Scripture, involving the theory of mechanical and verbal inspiration, which thenceforward assumed the primary place in Christian dogmatics. It was an unfortunate and mischievous change of base. It exposed Protestant Christianity to a double assault. Rome replied that the Church existed before the New Testament, and had always been the custodian of the sacred books, whose authenticity and integrity assumed the veracity of this traditional testimony, as the autograph manuscripts had long since disappeared; while Biblical criticism pointed out that the Hebrew vowels were the addition of latter copyists, that the extant manuscripts varied widely in their textual reading, and in the books which they contained, that the Septuagint differed from the received Hebrew text,

especially in its chronology, and that many of the books of the Old Testament, with the synoptic Gospels, and the epistle to the Hebrews, were either of anonymous authorship, or uncertain in date of composition, or composite in literary structure. The history of dogmatic thought, for the last two hundred and fifty years, has been largely an attempt to evade the force of these objections, either by reconciling the theory with the facts, or by endeavoring to withdraw from a position which has come to be regarded as untenable.

A clear and consistent doctrine of Scripture is something which Protestantism has not yet formulated, and which is still in process of constant revision, no version commanding general and hearty assent; and many have taken refuge in the practical use of the Bible, without inquiring into the nature of inspiration, or the scope of that authority which inspiration guarantees. Such an agnostic position cannot long be maintained, and must act as a perpetual check upon ardent souls, who insist upon certainty as indispensable to mental poise and moral enthusiasm. There can be no biblical preaching which does not seize the inde-

structible element of Scripture, the one message which dominates its entire and intricate framework, which is independent of lower and higher criticism alike, and whose authority is inseparable from its proclamation. And in thus passing from the letter to the quickening spirit, from a collection of pamphlets to the Gospel which they contain, we are simply going back to Luther, to Paul, and to Christ Himself. This is only another way of saying that the Bible is an organism, a vital unity, and not a collection of *disjecta membra*, and that therefore it must be understood as a whole, before there can be any profitable study of its component parts. Lower criticism may content itself with a comparison of manuscripts, the edition of the text, and with grammatical interpretation; higher criticism may advance to the more intricate questions of date, authorship, and internal structure; but the preacher meanwhile must be doing his work. He cannot wait for the last word from Tregelles or Tischendorf, nor for the latest theory propounded at Tübingen or Berlin; he must deal with the constant factor which all these researches assume; he must

give voice to that Living Word, whose reality and power are independent of human scholarship. He cannot be indifferent to what is going on in the universities; he ought to keep himself fully abreast of the intellectual life of his time; but the fierce debate should be mainly helpful to him in clarifying his discernment of what is primary and essential, and of what is secondary and of subordinate importance. The net result of Christian scholarship will be a simple Gospel, whose transcendent and transfiguring message glows undimmed and uninjured in the fiercest crucible, and wins the joyful assent of every earnest heart.

I find myself in hearty agreement with a living writer, when he says that "many points which now occupy the attention of biblical scholars, and call forth learned dissertations and elaborate treatises, are not worthy of the attention given them; and their labors will be regarded as the critical tithing of the mint, anise, and cumin." Some of you may live to see the day when the critical acumen of the nineteenth century will be regarded as a waste of intellectual energy, as we now label the

scholastic ingenuity of the Middle Ages, and the Gnostic speculations of the earlier centuries, when men will wonder that the simplicity of the preacher's task, in the use of the Bible, should ever have been mistaken. The pulpit is not the place for raising questions to which an authoritative answer cannot be given. Its power is in dealing with the universal and self-evidencing element in Holy Scripture, with a firm reliance that this vital message will come home in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost.

I am aware that this conception of the biblical element in preaching contravenes the traditional use of the Scriptures. We are never weary of asserting that every Christian ought to read his Bible, that preaching should be pervasively biblical, and that Christian theology, in its separate doctrines, and in their logical order, should issue from a careful study of the holy oracles. I can subscribe to all that. We agree in maintaining the plenary religious authority of the Bible. It is the preacher's text-book, as it is every disciple's manual. But what am I to read my Bible for? Am I to make no discrimination in its literary

contents ; am I to place all its histories, and miracles, and legislation upon the same level, and insist that everything recorded within its covers is of equally binding authority upon faith and conduct? Was not this the blunder of the early Puritans, who found in the enactments of the Jewish theocracy the fundamental law for civil government, and who therefore believed in the forcible suppression of heresy? They were true to their logic, but the major premise of their reasoning was vicious, because it assumed that all legislation was equally authoritative, unless it had been specifically revoked at a subsequent time. Are we to be debarred from following the principle of spiritual discrimination, which is so marked in our Lord's teaching, and whose bold use distinguishes the apostle to the Gentiles? Is there not need that we should heed those sharp words of rebuke which our Lord uttered in the synagogue at Capernaum, "It is the spirit which quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"? There is a literalism which dishonors the Bible, because it strangles its

life, and silences its sublime testimony. It discovers meanings in names and numbers which they were never intended to suggest. It finds types of Christ in everything, with interpretations and applications as fanciful as anything ever perpetrated by the allegorical school of Alexandria. It converts the Bible into a storehouse of texts, without any regard to the linguistic peculiarities of the writer, the people whom he addressed, and the end which he had in view. The concordance of Cruden is made the commentary of Scripture, and an insane man becomes the interpreter of an inspired volume. Balaam's words are invested with the same authority as those of Moses and Isaiah; and Caiaphas becomes as truly inspired as Paul and John. No distinction is made between good men and bad men, and even the words of the devil are quoted as inspired. Should you ever have occasion to preach from the fourth verse of the second chapter of Job, where we read, "Skin for skin: yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life," I advise you to begin your sermon with the sentence, "*That is a lie*"! The devil is represented as saying that; and the book

of Job proves that he lied when he said it. The statement is unqualifiedly false. Men will die for their honor, for their country, for God and truth.

You may think that I have selected an extreme illustration, and that there is a touch of sensationalism in my language, but my purpose is simply to remind you that the words and the sentences of the Bible are not, without further discrimination, the *Word of God* which you and I are to preach. If you quote Eliphaz, the Temanite, or Bildad, the Shuhite, I shall feel at liberty to criticise their ambitious theodicies, and under the shield of God's own emphatic repudiation, both in the book of Job and elsewhere, I shall not shrink from labelling their logic as partial, and their rhetoric as bombastic. And I should do this, because I am jealous of the Word of God, because I love it with a holy passion, and insist therefore that the real message shall not be indiscriminately confounded with the literary forms under which it has been recorded and preserved.

The time has forever gone by when the human element in the composition of the Scriptures can be ignored, or regarded as

incidental. They can be fully understood only in so far as we are able to reproduce the actual environment of their writers, and make due allowance for the peculiar phraseology in which they uttered their thoughts. They used the language and the formal logic of their times, and the oldest times of the great book are those of the imaginative Orient, of the beginnings of history, of primitive tradition in poetic and pictorial form. Hence the New Testament comes more closely home to us than the Old. The gospels and epistles are written in a language essentially modern, with a modern atmosphere and outlook. The Sermon on the Mount and the epistles of Paul fall in with our habits of thought and our use of speech. The farther back we go, the more pictorial becomes the language, until it becomes difficult to disentangle the historical from the ideal in the recorded tradition or narrative.

Nor is the human element confined to the phraseology. The theory that the writers of Scripture were qualified for their work by the gift of supernatural information is, at least in its unqualified form, an utterly gratuitous assumption. Luke, at

least, has told us how he went to work in preparing to write the gospel which bears his name, and the Acts of the Apostles. These books have generally been regarded as entitled to a place in the New Testament canon, on the assumption that Luke was the companion of an inspired apostle. But there is no evidence that Paul had anything to do with Luke's literary labors, or that he read Luke's manuscripts before they were sent to Theophilus. Luke wrote for a personal friend, and in the introduction to the first part of the story, which outlines the life of Christ, he referred to the sources of his information, and to the care which he had taken to collate, compare, and critically sift them. From all that appears, Luke acted the part simply of an earnest, patient, historical student, claiming no supernatural illumination, and never dreaming that his private letters would become universally recognized authorities. Does this simple explanation deprive these letters of their authority? Not in the least; but, on the other hand, their veracity is more firmly established. For while they only profess to record in some logical or chronological order the things which

were surely believed at the time, the eye-witnesses and ministers of the word had been consulted, and the result of the inquiry was communicated in private letters — a form of literary composition in which any doubt would have been freely expressed.

Nor can Luke be regarded as exceptional in this matter. If his writings are to be regarded as trustworthy and authoritative, the presumption is that the free use and incorporation of unknown documents and traditions were freely resorted to in the compilation of the historical portions of the Bible. A faithful use of the royal and the priestly archives was all that was needed for the composition of the books of the Kings and of the Chronicles. Nor can it be necessary to maintain that the Pentateuch, as we have it, was written by Moses, and that the portions preceding his own call were supernaturally communicated to him. Even the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, which can hardly be said to have been seriously assailed, does not compel us to assume that Genesis is anything more than a careful compilation of current traditions, serving as an introduction to the

real theme of the history. The emphasis is on the establishment of the Jewish commonwealth, under the law given at Sinai, and not on the length of the creative days, or on the nature of the forbidden fruit, or on the extent of the deluge, or on the building of the tower of Babel.

Thus each separate book must be read in the light of its living, germinant idea and intention. Nor can we stop here. When the inductive and analytic process has been completed, the results must be compared and co-ordinated in their historical order, and the main thought which dominates the whole must be eliminated. *That* will be the law, the prophets, and the Gospel, which you are to preach, faintly gleaming in the first promise of the seed who should bruise the serpent's head, and making radiant the face and ministry of Jesus Christ.

It has been said with truth that criticism has not essentially altered the main facts of Israel's history. It has labelled some things as legendary and allegorical. But the Decalogue, the Temple service, the Psalms, and the Prophets have remained, as showing the great thoughts, and record-

ing the profound spiritual experiences, which stirred a multitude of hearts when paganism was well-nigh universal, and disclosing the ground upon which that sublime faith reposed. And it may be said, even more emphatically, that a criticism which in its extreme form leaves us four great Pauline epistles, and which confesses that the belief of the early Christians in the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ is incapable of psychological explanation, has accomplished nothing to discredit Christianity, and has only placed in stronger relief the spiritual energy of that Gospel which knows only Christ and Him crucified. Thus, with even the most meagre equipment, pushing the logic of elimination to its utmost verge, the great verities of God, and law, and sin, and redemption by Jesus Christ, remain as the most potent energies in personal experience and in the march of history. You can trace these thoughts in their orderly development and final expression in the fragmentary pamphlets which make up your Bible. If you place them in chronological order, the Gospel by the apostle John will crown the literary structure, and the whole will be

radiant in the glory of Him who declared that He had come to reveal the Father, and to give His life for the world's redemption.

Here is the vital pulse and the beating heart of all Scripture, in the *revelation of God*, in his self-expression, by word and deed, by law and prophecy, by precept and promise, in personal experience and history, in redemption and judgment. You are to read the Bible to find out what God has to say about Himself, to discover what He is, what He thinks of you, and what He has done for you. Every one of the autograph manuscripts has been lost — *what of that?* There are a hundred thousand variations in the Greek text of the New Testament alone — *what of that?* The genealogies and the chronology of the Bible are in hopeles confusion — *what of that?* You are reading a human translation — *what of that?* Suppose Moses did not write the major part of the Pentateuch; suppose the Levitical legislation to be largely post-exilian; suppose the latter part of Isaiah to be from the pen of an unknown author, and Daniel to be an anonymous composition of unknown date; suppose Job to be a drama and Jonah an

allegory; suppose the greater part of Genesis to be the survival of primitive traditions in pictorial or poetic form; suppose all this, and much more — *what of that?* It is well to remember the words of Cardinal Baronius, that the Scriptures tell us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go. Nor were they given us to tell us how they came to be what they are, but what we must do to be saved, and that God, in His love, sent Jesus Christ to save us.

Is not that Paul's doctrine, when he declares that the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, that their design is instruction in righteousness? And did not our Lord declare that "eternal life" was the hidden theme of all prophecy, a perpetual anticipation of, and testimony to, that Divine redemptive purpose which secured historical fulfilment in Himself? Let us cease, at least in the pulpit, to discuss the cosmogony of Genesis, the passage of the Red Sea, the manna in the wilderness, the story of Balaam and his ass, of Jonah and the whale, of Joshua and the sun, of demoniacal possession, and especially of the Gadarene swine, upon which latter narra-

tive Mr. Huxley discourses at such length and with so much feeling, as if the fate of a few thousand pigs had anything to do with the history of man's redemption. Are these things the vital, universal matter of the Scriptures? For myself, I believe in a personal devil and in demoniacal possession, though I frankly own that I do not know what to make of Balaam and Jonah; but I am not prepared to say that a man cannot be saved unless he believes in Satan; I am satisfied if he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. I have heard some say as they banged the Book that they believed every word within its covers. So do I; but I insist upon reading my Bible as that Bible tells me to read it, as the revelation of God, as giving me a vivid and glorious disclosure of His character, and purposes, and redemptive deeds, and so waking in me patience, faith, hope, love, and joy. The true use of the Bible is not that of minute exegesis, nor that of interpretation from the context, nor that of synthetic exposition of each separate book, but that of a firm grasp upon its great fundamental and universally dominant verities, which verities are vital and

regnant now, and would be, if every copy of the Bible should be destroyed. Do not misunderstand me. Exegesis cannot be too exact. Analysis and synthesis cannot be too careful. But when all this has been done, it still remains for you to co-ordinate all the results under that which is the supreme law of Holy Scripture — the revelation of God in redemption. That is what I mean by biblical preaching, in which sin and salvation constitute the perpetual undertone, the inspiration of all worship, the secret of all emotion, the urgency of every appeal, the fire and the force of all reasoning.

If this is not the true use of the Bible, then why is it that the Bible is just such a book as it is? Surely God could easily have so shaped events as to have preserved every autograph manuscript of every book and psalm in the Bible. In such a case we should have been saved all perplexing questions of authorship, date, structure, and the like. Criticism might have been made forever impossible, or only the employment of fools. But such is not the Bible which we have; nor can I conceive of any other reason why we do not have such a Bible

as I have described, than that God never intended that we should have such an one; that He was indifferent as to its literal preservation; that just such a Bible as we have, with its critical difficulties and uncertainties, was meant to be placed in our hands and used by us; and that, therefore, the critical problems which are paraded with so much ostentation, and which are a trial to the faith of so many, are of subordinate importance, and should not be permitted to disturb us in the slightest degree. They do not annoy the ignorant man in his devotions, to whom the Scriptures are a Divine lamp, filled with beaten oil and glowing with a celestial flame, lighting up for him the path of his pilgrimage through the gloomy gates of death, to where the heavens are forever blue and radiant; and it is an abuse of scholarship when it is permitted to diminish the intensity, or to interrupt the continuity, of this spiritual and Divine fellowship. The refuge of the preacher is not in ignorance, nor in special pleading, nor in suspended judgment, but in the candid recognition of all doubtful and debatable questions, and in such a conception and estimate of the Bible that

he can use it with ever-increasing facility and force, with the utmost assurance that the freest and most thorough scholarly research can only help in the end the cause of truth, whatever havoc it may make with traditional verdicts and judgments.

I have tried, in this discussion, not to lose sight of the fact that I have been asked to lecture on preaching. I have resisted the temptation to make excursions into the field of dogmatics, and I have refrained from an attempt to discuss the burning questions of modern biblical criticism. I have simply reminded you that there is no agreement on the nature of inspiration, nor on the literary sources which the writers of the Scriptures used in their work. Not one of us is indifferent to these inquiries, but while they are being prosecuted, we must have a Bible which we can conscientiously use, or else manfully step down and out.

Of course I speak of reverent and Christian criticism. I leave wholly out of the account that school whose philosophical postulate is a denial of the supernatural, whose definition of the word "scientific" involves the impossibility of miracles, and

who insist upon accounting for the history of the Jewish commonwealth and for the establishment of the Christian Church, as they would in tracing the events which led to the establishment of the American Republic; though, even in the latter case, the supernatural element emerges in the profound religious convictions which drove the Pilgrims from Scrooby to Leyden, and from Leyden across the waste of waters to Plymouth Rock. As Descartes insisted that absolute doubt involved the existence of the doubter, defying elimination by any process of dialectics, so it may be said that personality is itself the affirmation of the supernatural, and that even he who denies the existence of a personal God proves that the idea of the supernatural is a perfectly indigenous and familiar form of thought. It is a waste of time to argue with an atheist or a pantheist. The short method with such people is the direct appeal to the sense of personal dependence, and of personal obligation. The only argument here is that of self-conviction; and that can never fail, for the soul is eternally at war with any system which eliminates the ethical, and

the ethical means a personal and righteous God.

Nor have I sought for a common ground with those who reduce Christ to a myth, or who refuse to recognize His prophetic authority and redeeming energy. There can be no religion without a personal God, and there can be no Christianity without the Lord Jesus Christ. The personal revelation of God in Christ is assumed, not merely, nor even mainly, on the ground of historic evidence, but on the incontrovertible ground of personal experience, in ever widening circles, and in ever deepening intensity. The life of the world was never so full of the personal Christ as it is to-day. But this revelation of the personal God in Jesus Christ, which is the supreme fact and the conquering energy of our time, is the only thing which I have postulated, and my contention is that this is the essential element in that long history, whose broken and fragmentary records make up the Scriptures. That constitutes not only the unity of Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, and John, but also the unity of the Bible and of our living Christianity. The broad and widening stream is thereby seen

to be one with its original sources, traced to the origin of man. Therein lies the value of the Bible, and that must be the supreme canon of interpretation. God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, is its great theme. All other questions, whether dogmatic or critical, are subordinate, and may be ignored in your vocation as preachers of the Gospel.

I am perfectly aware that all this is not new to you. You have gone all over this ground in the lecture-room. But the atmosphere of the pulpit is not that of the library. You can read the story of Napoleon's wars, and study the maps of his campaigns, without palpitation of heart; but your face would blanch at the flash of sabres, and you would dodge the cannon-balls if you saw them speeding from the guns. To proclaim upon the housetops what has been whispered in the ear, requires moral courage. Still, that which gives a relief to you, you are bound to give to others. You may not, even by your silence, countenance a claim for the Bible, which claim every intelligent hearer knows to have been discredited by Christian scholarship. To do that will subject you to the charge, either of

ignorance or of cowardice. You need not, you should not, make the pulpit the arena of debate upon questions in dispute; you need not, you should not, pose as the advocate of this or that theory of inspiration, of this or that school of critical inquiry; but you can, and you ought to, use your Bible as the record of the revelation of God to men, and give men plainly to understand that this is the vital marrow of Scripture, a living fact whose presence and power cannot be ignored, and which is wholly independent of either the lower or higher criticism. Let your hearers see, by your personal attitude, that they need not be perpetually dodging cannon-balls, accompanied with smoke, and flash, and roar, that through the serried ranks of locked bayonets the real Bible sweeps onward to the conquest of the earth. Do not undertake to wear Saul's armor. Go forth with sling and pebble, as David did, when he answered the challenge of the proud Philistine. The simplest view of the Bible is the best, both for yourself and for your hearers. Its free and reverent handling will invest it with a power little dreamed of; so profound in its insight, so searching

its disclosure of the secrets of personal unrest, and of national decadence, so true to life its description of the moral conflict which wages in every soul, so convincing its revelation of the character of God, so winning its portraiture of Christ, so assuring and inspiring its promises and predictions. Bring men at once into the Holy of Holies, and they will forget the merchants and money-changers, the din of whose voices fills the outer courts.

Of course, such a preaching of the Gospel takes for granted that the personal revelation of God in Jesus Christ has been verified for you in personal experience. The secret of the Lord must be in your possession. With it, the most meagre attainments in scholarship may make you a messenger of power; without it, the amplest literary equipment and the loftiest eloquence will leave your speech "*as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*"

THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT IN PREACHING.

I.

I PURPOSE in the present lecture to follow up the hint so admirably phrased by the honored and mourned occupant of this chair for 1884, but which he reluctantly dismissed from thorough discussion, contenting himself with saying that "a sermon gets to be a sermon, and saves itself from being a lecture, by being made and delivered in the Holy Ghost." That expresses the exact truth, and I deeply regret that the man who could put the whole matter so tersely, did not address himself to its full exposition; for a clear analysis of the elements of what is called spirituality, is of supreme importance both for the preacher and for the hearer. I had not read the sentence which I have quoted until long after I had marked out the plan of the present course, and had become

deeply absorbed in the theme on which I venture to speak; but I heard in it a voice responding to my own convictions, and urging me to renewed and severer and prayerful reflection. That the preacher should be a spiritual man, and that every sermon should be saturated with the spiritual element, as the atmosphere is charged with moisture and light, will be at once admitted by every one; but the very promptness of the admission constitutes one of the difficulties of the discussion, as if the self-evidence of the proposition provided also its definition. I shall, therefore, ask you, first, to consider what spirituality is, and secondly, to inquire by what methods it may be cultivated and cherished.

There is a vast deal of vague and unsatisfactory thought about the first question. Spirituality is frequently spoken of as if it consisted in a peculiar temperament, the constitutional possession of a few, or as if it were a special, supernaturally imparted gift. A distinction is often made between that general operation of the Holy Ghost, which issues in regeneration, assurance and sanctification,

the universal heritage of all believers, and that special indwelling of the Spirit which constitutes a baptism, or an enduement with power. They are regarded as essentially distinct, as proceeding upon different conditions, moving in different planes, and designed for different ends. But when Paul describes the gifts of the Spirit, he not only makes them the manifestations and the operations of a single energy, reducing all difference to one of degree, he also affirms that the law of distribution is a thoroughly rational and impartial one, determined not only by the personal sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, dividing to every man severally as He will, nor merely by the principle of grace or unmerited favor, but also graduated to the proportion of faith, "the receptive faculty," as Alford says, "for all spiritual gifts." Sovereignty, grace, and the measure of faith are co-ordinated, and must be regarded as interdependent and organically indivisible; and in the measure or proportion of faith, personal responsibility and personal activity are most clearly affirmed. For while faith is the gift of God, it is also the universal duty and prerogative of man;

not an isolated or mechanical act, securing the gift of personal salvation, defined as trust in a person, but an habitual and elevated state or grace of the soul, its maturing power of spiritual perception, appropriation, and activity. Our business, therefore, concerns this personal attitude, the completeness of our voluntary subjec tion to faith; for faith is the human condition determining and limiting the distribution of spiritual gifts.

Now faith is defined, in its generic and essential being, as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It deals with the invisible, and has an immutable conviction of the unseen as the eternal reality, which rational conviction urges to and secures moral conformity. Faith is contrasted with sight, never with knowledge. It is knowledge of the highest order, reason apprehending the unveiled and eternal secrets of being, human and Divine, so true that in their clear and complete perception the moral law enacts itself with all its sanctions. The spiritual man is he who has the mind, the *φρόνημα* of the Spirit, who cherishes the thoughts, the desires, and the aims of the Spirit, who

views all things in God, who adopts the Divine estimates and purposes, who regards all that is from its invisible and eternal side, and who gladly, even eagerly, brings his own life into habitual conformity with the revelation. He is a seer, and he does not permit himself to be disobedient to the heavenly vision. Spirituality, then, is an intensely active state. It is rational and voluntary, a frame of mind which Paul makes the evidence of regeneration, when he declares that the mind of the Spirit is life and peace, and which he contrasts with the mind of the flesh, that carnal, sensuous, self-centred, and selfish way of thinking and acting, against which every man is warned as sure to end in death.

This rules out the notion that spirituality is the equivalent of ecstasy, a breaking through of the limits of conscious personality, a contemplative absorption, in which the reason is benumbed or paralyzed. This is mysticism, and mysticism is a pantheistic transformation of New Testament Christianity. It is the child of the Orient, whose heaven is Nirvana, and at an early day it began to influence Christian thought and worship. Against this error Paul entered

his earnest protest in his correspondence with the Church of Corinth, warning them not to make the mistake of supposing that spiritual perceptions or experiences were unintelligible, either to the recipient or to the hearer. They spake with tongues, and in such a state of excitement, that when they sang, or prayed, or exhorted, nobody could understand them; while the confusion was increased by several taking part at one and the same time. The apostle insisted that all this was wrong. He laid down the doctrine that God is the God of order, and that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, that the highest spiritual state is a conscious and voluntary one. He appealed to his own experience. He reminded his hearers, that he too had the gift of tongues, and in a more remarkable degree than they all, that he had been caught up to the third heaven, when he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body, but that even then he saw and heard, the recipient of an intelligible and remembered revelation, which he did not feel at liberty to communicate; and that when he sang or prayed, it was not only an act of the spirit, but also of the

understanding. He recognizes no exception to the rule that the spiritual state is always a conscious, intelligent, and intelligible one. It is the pagan notion of inspiration, that the deity mesmerizes the man, throws him into physical convulsions, induces epilepsy and mental vacuity, so that he does not know what he is doing or saying. Not such is Biblical inspiration, for the writers of the Bible knew what they meant to say, and to get at that meaning is our chief business as reverent students of the Word. Inspiration was not ecstasy, a Divine mesmerism; and least of all is spirituality such a mood.

Nor is spirituality, primarily or mainly, an emotional state, a condition of unusual intensity of feeling, expressing itself in boisterous or pathetic speech. It is not a thing of tears and tones. The general law of the sensibility is that it is not under the direct control of the will. Its states are involuntary and necessary concomitants of perception and action, whether physical, mental, or moral. Some nerve must be touched and jarred before there can be pain, and then the pain comes without your consent, nor can it be dismissed at

your option. You cannot make yourself hungry or thirsty whenever you choose, nor can you quiet the empty stomach and cool the fever of parched lips by a command. Whether you shall have a bitter or a sweet taste in your mouth, depends upon your taking a lump of sugar or a quinine pill. From a pleasant dream you wake refreshed and sunny; from a horrible one you wake exhausted and trembling. Good news makes you happy; bad news fills you with alarm. Bright thoughts make your face shine; gloomy thoughts make the countenance sad; bitter thoughts create a scowl. Love and hate are the reflex in sensibility of the action of reason and will. You can learn to love those whom once you hated, by studying them more carefully, judging them more impartially, by becoming better acquainted with them; and the same process may change your attachment into aversion. The emotion changes under the new estimate which prolonged attention creates. If that attention, which is only reason held to its task by the will, discloses some element of good behind the most repulsive wrappings, love will come to its birth.

Not otherwise is the love for God waked in human hearts. It comes through the revelation of what God is and does, by the apprehension of His veracity and infinite goodness. The will compels the soul to look and listen, to hear and heed the revelation; and when this result has been secured, the emotions of peace and joy bring their sunshine and their song into life. So far as the process of conversion can be traced, it begins in the will as compelling attention, and it is completed in the gradual clearing away of misapprehensions, in the emergence of right ethical perceptions and judgments, in an intelligent, unprejudiced view of self, and of God's attitude towards man in Jesus Christ. Repentance is simply change of mind, induced by serious and prolonged attention, which attention becomes a fixed voluntary mental habit, and the convictions thus formed become the formative elements of the regenerated character and conduct. The new mental perceptions, changed through the will into the organic law of moral life, evoke, by necessary reflex action, the appropriate emotions of penitence, peace, hope, joy, and love. So

that the Scriptural injunction is as profoundly philosophical as it is practical, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any praise, think on these things." The emphasis is on the rational, not on the emotional; if men will only think upon the right things, the things that are true and fair and pure, with an intensity and continuity that shall make every rational perception a law to the moral nature, and a principle of personal conduct, the appropriate feelings will come of themselves, as perfume exhales from flowers.

There are many who sneer at doctrinal preaching, who tell us that intellectualism in religion is cold and chilling, and that the true sphere of Christian experience is in the sensibilities. Matthew Arnold's famous phrase that religion is "morality touched with emotion," expresses this phase of modern religious philosophy. Religion is viewed as the poetry and sentiment of practical life. In the biblical conception, it is not emotion which transfigures moral-

ity into religion, but the open vision of the living God, the profound and habitual conviction of His presence, His moral majesty, and His eternal compassion. Men are changed into the image of Christ by the Spirit of the Lord, through that fixed attention which reveals, and in revealing imparts, the spiritual glory of the Son of God. The process is voluntary and rational, not emotional. Let practical morality be moved by the thought of what God is, as revealed in Jesus Christ, and it will become Divine. The earthly, the sensual, the selfish, will drop away, as dead leaves fall before the push of swelling buds. And the fountains of the deep will be broken up. There will be tears and laughter, trembling and hope, shame and exultant joy. Great thoughts are what Herder called for, when he lay dying; and great thoughts are the bread which men must eat if they are to become sinewy and strong, with the flush of health upon the cheek.

A rational religion cannot be passionless. To look upon the things that are invisible, to have an abiding personal conviction of their reality and their eternal majesty, cannot leave a man icy and inactive. It will

make every nerve in him quiver, every drop of blood in his veins boil. The vision will evoke the passion. Let a man drift down the Niagara River, with hands folded, and half asleep, until the warning roar of the cataract rouses him and makes him attentive. What makes him seize the oars, and bend to his work, until every muscle is at its utmost strain, and the breath comes hot and quick from his lips? He has seen the impending danger, and he has heard the angry tones of the abyss. Should he succeed in gaining the shore, or make the awful plunge without loss of life, no one would need to tell him to rejoice. The danger would be that the necessary reaction in the sensibility would throw him into a swoon, if it did not paralyze the action of the heart. Neither can any man have a vivid conception of what God is, in His holiness and grace, in His majesty and power, in His infinity and eternity, without experiencing the correspondent emotions of alarm, of remorse, of penitence, of despair, of hope, of joy. What the feelings shall be will depend upon the attitude which the will assumes to the disclosure. The thought which is real and vital to the soul, before

whose authority the will bows, and to which it compels obedience, cannot maintain its place and do its work without rousing the sensibilities, any more than a bar of red-hot iron can be applied to your flesh without provoking a cry of pain. You can play at thinking, give yourself up to intellectual amusement, and learn to laugh when you deal with the most awful themes; but then you do not really believe or see them, they have not become eternal realities to you. When thought does become vital, and when your will locks arms with your conviction, you will have all the feeling you can take care of. "Meditate on these things" was the great apostle's parting word to Timothy, "give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all"; an excellent rule for the individual Christian, and for the Christian preacher.

That the feelings are not directly under our control, and should not form the burden of our immediate anxiety, is plain also when you consider another fact of great importance. One emotion may be crowded out by another and an opposite one. You can become unconscious of hunger, weari-

ness, and even acute pain, by complete absorption in something else. You may not be able to eat while your thought is brooding, and you may be insensible to great physical discomfort. A great joy, or an overwhelming sorrow, takes away your appetite. A sudden danger makes you careless of appearances. Sleep forsakes you when the sick demand your attention. Fear vanishes when a great crisis is upon you. The lower emotion retreats before the higher. But how? You do not deal directly with your feelings; something comes in to change the direction of your thoughts, until by attention they are diverted and riveted, and as these new thoughts master you, the feelings change without effort on your part. Now, this fact is of the highest practical importance. If you want to change your own feelings, or the feelings of others, there must be a change in the thoughts; you must give to the mental vision a different direction.

I might tarry here to show that this simple rule provides you with a principle of the highest order for your pastoral duties, in your treatment of inquirers, in your

visits to the sick, in your converse with the bereaved and the despondent. You must honor the law of expulsion, and you must expel by the earnest use of other thoughts, until you have induced a healthy mental vision. But this is not my present purpose; and a hint is, perhaps, all that is needed here. I am trying to make it clear that spirituality is not an emotional state, as the emotions are not directly under our control, and cannot therefore be regarded as moral or spiritual *per se;* and that a higher emotion can displace a lower one only by the introduction of another and intenser thought. The lions in the way filled Christian with alarm, until he saw that they were chained, and then he marched between them singing. The valley of shadows did not affright David, because he knew that the Divine shepherd was with him. It was under the power of a rational judgment that Paul sacrificed the world for Christ. There was not a particle of sentiment in his decision, and in his adherence to it. He looked at his stripes and scars as medals of honor, stamped into his frail and mortal body. To die was to finish his ministry with joy, and then to be

forever with his Lord. He never whined. There is no "holy tone" in his epistles, and there could have been none in his speech. He rejoiced in tribulation, because it brought glory. He apologized for referring to his sufferings and his exalted privileges, as if ashamed of instituting any comparison between himself and other men, or of calling attention to what was purely personal to himself. He did not ask for pity when he lay in a dungeon and anticipated martyrdom; he wanted to be congratulated, and he was always joyful himself. Now, this was not a matter of temperament with him, nor were his courage and hope miraculously imparted and sustained; it was the inevitable emotional result of his way of looking at things. He, like Moses, endured as seeing Him who is invisible; and such rational perception of the eternal is always and everywhere the essence of heroism. He who walks with God is mighty, and will hush men into awe.

The apostle himself defines spirituality, when he speaks of it, as "the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind." The statement is anti-climactic. It in-

cludes the will, the emotions, and the reason; but the mood has its rise in mental sanity, produces love, and issues in moral energy. The first thing is soundness of mind, looking at things as they really are, and at all things in their ordered and eternal unity. Spirituality is simply downright common sense. I do not even say "sanctified" common sense, for unsanctified common sense is the baldest nonsense. "Be spiritual" is only another way of saying, "Be sensible," for the man is a fool who never thinks of his immortal soul, and who puts God out of his thoughts.

It accords with this that the common designation of the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Truth." He convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He takes of the things of Christ, and reveals them unto us. He brings them to our remembrance. He regenerates and sanctifies men through the truth. He moves the heart by enlightening the understanding. He opens our eyes and unstops our ears; and when once the soul has seen the glory of the Lord, responding to it by a prompt obedience, the lips break forth in song, and the life will be transfigured.

The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, His revealed and living thought, piercing to the marrow, dissecting soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. The spiritually minded man is he who accepts the judgment resulting from this comparison, and who gives to the revealed thought of God the sole, and continuous, and comprehensive supremacy over himself. This is the φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος in which every sermon should be made and preached, and without which it is not a sermon at all. It includes a rational, an emotional, and a voluntary element; for all these are involved in the word which Paul uses; but, as we have seen, the emotional quality comes in by reflex action, while the rational and the voluntary features are the ones with which we are summoned actively and energetically to deal. Spirituality is the fixed and obedient mental habit of piercing to that which is essential, universal, and eternal.

Now, the invisible universe, so far as we have any knowledge of it, is constituted by two factors, and only two, — God and the soul. Everything else resolves itself into the interpretation and the rela-

tion of these two personal subsistences. Law and government, whether human or Divine, are not separate entities; they inhere and are identical with the living thoughts of God or of man. They are what they are, simply because God and man are what they are. They could not be other than they are, nor can they ever suffer change, simply because God is what He is by an eternal, voluntary, moral necessity, and because He made man in his image. The task of spirituality in preaching, then, is this, to estimate the soul as it really is, and to estimate God as He really is.

And who are you, and who are they to whom you speak? What is man? You may define him by the physical element of his nature, whose powers are insignificant, whose days are an handbreadth, whose achievements are vanity. You may define him in the terms of his moral consciousness, under the dominion of sin and guilt, restless in his bondage, yet hopelessly enslaved. But in all this you have not reached the living thought of God. You are more than all this, though you might never have dreamed of it had it not been revealed to you. You

are a child of God. You are a temple in ruins; but, as John Howe says, you are a temple still; or as Horace Bushnell says, there is an awful dignity in your degradation even. If you are honest and fearless with yourself, you will be habitually penitent and contrite, in view of your repeated failures and shortcomings; broken in heart, contrite in spirit, because you are so great a sinner, falling so far short of what you ought to be. You will never outgrow the fifty-first Psalm. You can never become proud and self-conceited, nor rest content with your best work. You will never overtake either your personal or your professional ideal. You may not burn last year's sermons, but you will not preach them a second time, until they have been born again in the travail of your better thought. But you will advance beyond this estimate of your conscious moral imperfection and immaturity. There will come to you also the thought that the prodigal son, ragged, hungry, and disgraced, is a son still. This is the transfiguring touch upon our self-knowledge. You have looked into your own mirror, and have seen an immortal soul under the power of

sin. Now, look into your genealogy, and into the face of Jesus Christ. God has never surrendered, not qualified in the least His paternal claim upon you, and there is not one of you whom He is willing to lose. There is a place in His heart and in heaven for you; and it will be forever empty, if you do not come back to fill it. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," is the repeated refrain of John, in gospel and epistle, the silver bugle-note to which his every thought marches; and that will lift you to the highest heavens. Think of yourself in that way, and poverty will lose its sting, any sphere of service will be great, whether on the frontier or in the metropolis, whether among the cultured or the savage, powers will be consecrated and grow lustrous, obscurity will be radiant, fame will shine with a supernal glory, grief will have its mighty consolation, life will be an unending song, and death will be the open gate to your Father's house.

And remember, what you are, as thus read in the light of God's living thought, everybody else is—the beggar, the outcast, the millionnaire, the laborer, the white

man, and the black man. All men are made in the Divine image. All men are dear to God. All men are redeemed in Christ. There is no monopoly in the Divine adoption; for the blood of Adam courses in all veins, and the blood of Jesus Christ is the seal of a universal reconciliation. Now this way of estimating man is the spiritual way, because it fixes attention upon the invisible and essential kernel of being; and that is the only rational procedure. Under such an estimate you will respect and love all men, however ignorant and debased they may have become; and you will not cease to pray for them, and labor with them, until they are withdrawn from earth. For upon this estimate, there must always remain an infinite chasm between the most abandoned man or woman, and a brute. It is this perception which distinguishes the Christian civilization from all preceding and contemporaneous ones. It was a theatrical flourish, when Terence cried out, "Nothing human I count foreign to myself"; a hollow mockery of sentiment, when you recall the frightful scenes of the gladiatorial contests, and read of the cold-blooded butcheries of the Coliseum.

The thought was not a vital and vitalizing one. There was no regard for human life, no respect for woman, no pity for children, no compassion for the slave. The infinite value of the human soul in the sight of God, it has well been said, came upon the thoughts of men like a new and startling revelation; and its leavening power is yet far from having done its mighty work. It is the hardest practical thing for you and me to do, to estimate men by what they are as immortal and moral beings, infinitely dear to God, and to treat them accordingly. But that is the foremost sign and evidence of spiritual-mindedness. It will make you tender and solicitous. It will make you brave and impartial. It will make you democratic. It will make you cosmopolitan, with a hand for every man, and a heart for all the world. It will make your preaching spiritual because it will reflect the mind of the Holy Spirit, and so be eternally true.

It has not escaped you, I am sure, that I have not been able to speak of the estimate of man as our point of departure, from which we should proceed to the making and delivery of every sermon, without passing over to the view of God which

should shape our conscious and habitual thought. I have transcended the testimony of natural psychology in affirming that man is made in the image of God, and that he is the child of God, and in insisting that this is the only rational standard of valuation for ourselves and for others. I have assumed a revelation of God in defining what man is; I have put my theology into my anthropology. For sonship involves fatherhood, and the filial dignity can be measured only by the paternal rank and provision. But this was inevitable; for the whole truth is not stated when we say that our conceptions of what God is must be necessarily anthropomorphic in their content and expression: it is also true, and it is the deeper truth, that our conceptions of what man is, must, in order to be exact and complete, be theomorphic. Man must be viewed in God, that is, in the light of God's eternal, living thought, which is inseparable from his essential being. For what God is, determines what man, created in His image, is by original vocation, what he ought to be, and what he may become; and what God is, discloses what His thoughts and pur-

poses must be concerning man. So that the knowledge of God has priority, in the logical order, over the knowledge of man; but in the chronological or experimental order, the relation is reversed. For the knowledge of God, which is eternal life, is not the precipitate of deductive logic, starting from some metaphysical conception of Him, implicitly lodged in the rational intuition of the soul. It is the fruit of inductive reasoning, based upon the facts of a historical revelation, reaching its maturity in the person and ministry of our Lord. He reveals the Father, and in so doing He interprets man's place and gracious prerogative.

I shall have more to say of this farther on; at the present I wish only to emphasize the thought that what God is, determines the mind of the spirit, or the spirituality of the preacher. His mental tone and temper will be shaped by his living thought of God. There is no department of dogmatics where he needs to exercise greater care, where he requires greater accuracy, docility, and comprehensiveness, than in forming his doctrine of God. A partial view, or a distorted one, in which

the scripturally historical perspective is not jealously maintained, will vitiate all his mental processes and his spoken words. He must prepare himself to give to every revelation which God has made of Himself, its natural and unqualified force, even if he should find it impossible to combine them all into a perfectly coherent unity. It may be that the Divine majesty, its balanced and rounded moral perfection, while it was incarnated in a human life, cannot be reproduced in mental concepts, nor photographed in the speech of man. The point of supreme importance is that God be recognized as the Living One, the Subject of conscious, voluntary movement in thought, emotion, and action. His Being may be so construed as to eliminate the reality of all human personality, and to recognize in second causes only a nominal energy; and it will make little difference whether this pervasive and exclusive presence be defined in terms of substance, as Spinoza does, or in terms of thought, as Hegel does, or in terms of will, as Jonathan Edwards does, an unethical fatalism will be the result; and a kind of speechless awe will characterize the resultant piety. The glory

of God will be regarded as the final cause of all things, to be secured and displayed at any cost, giving no account of itself to angel or man; and I do not see how any man can avoid feeling sometimes, that such a God, while commanding unselfishness — is supremely selfish Himself.

But this is the God of metaphysical theology, which makes Will in God primary, inclusive, and sovereign. Such a God is a speculative fiction; He is not the God who reveals Himself in the history of the world, in the record of Scripture, and in the face of Jesus Christ. These media disclose a sovereignty which has given reality to second causes, to the life of created reason, and to moral responsibility in man, and which is infinitely sensitive and conscientious in maintaining and guarding what it has called into existence. The immanence is such that it eliminates neither the Divine personal transcendence, nor the full reality and responsibility of the dependent creature. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being"; but in that interpenetration there is a *Him*, and there is a *We;* the personal distinctions are rigorously conserved.

That fact is of infinitely greater practical importance for us than a speculative theory of the nexus between God and the world. An inductive logic compels us to rest in theological dualism, just as we are forced to recognize a natural dualism in an inductive philosophy of perception. Theological determinism is open to the same objections which lie against philosophical idealism; it does not deal honestly with the facts, and the logical process is deductive, not inductive. The facts reveal a God who, while Sovereign, does not regard the created universe as a shadow, nor use men as machines. Freedom is a real thing, not merely formal; and even God does not invade its prerogatives. He does not choose for me, nor does He, in any strict sense, choose in me. In a word, He is the Living God, alive to what is due to Himself, alive to what is due to everything that He has made, promoting His glory by promoting the highest well-being of the universe.

The doctrine of the Divine immutability supplies another instance in which a deductive logic has thrust the living God practically out of sight. His unchangeableness has been conceived as erasing all distinc-

tions in time, in thought, in emotion, and in action. He, we are told, dwells in an eternal Now; with Him there is no past, and no future. Strictly speaking, it has been urged, there can be no conscious succession of thought in God, no real change in His feelings, no separate and successive volitions. The whole conscious life of Deity is interpreted "sub specie eternitatis," in which succession and change can form no conceivable part. The past, the present, and the future, are represented as held in the grasp of a single thought; all separate volitions as merged in a single, eternal act of the will; and no varying emotional states are recognized as having anything more than an apparent, anthropomorphic reality.

You may call such a Being the Living, Personal God; but it is difficult to see how such an activity differs from an eternal and hopeless quiescence. I am free to say, that to my way of thinking, an eternal Now, as that phrase is theologically used, is eternal nonsense. It is a pure assumption that omniscience destroys the differences between memory, present perception, and prevision. It is a pure as-

sumption that unity of thought eliminates separateness and succession in conscious thinking. It is a pure assumption that unity of will resolves all separate volitions into a figure of speech. It is a pure assumption that the ethical blessedness of God makes it impossible for Him to be the subject of emotional change, to pass from wrath to pity, and from pity to love, and from love to indignation. And all this is squarely in the teeth of all that God has said, through the records of Scripture, and by the words of Jesus Christ. He speaks of Himself as grieving over sin, as pleading with men, as roused to judgment, as hearing and answering prayer, as remembering His covenant, as preparing the way for future displays of power and grace. He is never surprised, nor is He ever outwitted. Forecordination is eternal and inclusive; but that does not destroy the distinction between what God remembers as past, and what He sees as present, and what He knows as future. The separate and successive Divine volitions are coordinated in the eternal will, — not one of them is arbitrary, revolutionary, disturbing the vital unity of His holy purpose, — but

that does not destroy the difference, in the Divine consciousness, between what God has done, and is now doing, and will do hereafter. The will, like the thought of God, is in living, conscious movement. Change and succession are in them, as well as unity.

Nor is it otherwise with the emotional life of God, when scripturally interpreted. There is pain in His blessedness. Sin rouses His indignation, and the perception of penitence, as with us, wakes in Him the sense of gladness and provokes His instant approval. A rational ethical unity underlies and pervades all this, but the unity only gives eternal validity to the change which comes to the heart of God, when the sinner becomes a penitent. All this is as clear as noonday when what God says about Himself is allowed its natural force; and I need not stop to show how such a perception of God makes Him intensely real, in vital contact with the soul of man.

But the most important thing yet remains to be said. Nothing is more indispensable for the spiritual life of the preacher, and for the spiritual power of his preaching, than a firm grasp upon the ethical unity

of God's nature, and so upon the ethical unity of His moral government. Here the great battle has been between the justice and the mercy of God, between His holiness and His grace. The atonement has been represented as their eternal reconciliation, or as an economic compromise between their conflicting claims, as if God were doing the best He could to pay His own debts, or paying no more than was actually necessary. Whether it is so intended or not, such a representation makes God in painful conflict with Himself, and destroys the unity of his ethical life. Then, again, the justice of God has been made central, and love has been remanded to a subordinate place, as in the Westminster Confession, and in the Calvinistic theology generally. Grace has been limited to the elect, and election has been supposed to embody an eternal, sovereign, unconditional decree. Explain it as you will, the sober, plain Christian judgment pronounces such a doctrine hard, cruel, irrational, immoral, and blasphemous. It is an outrage on man, and an insult to God; and agitation will not cease until in all the symbols the love of God is given

an equal place with His justice, instead of being crowded into a preliminary and introductory definition; until the ethical unity of the Divine nature gets its full recognition, in which his justice is his mercy, and his grace is his holiness.

And finally, the ethical unity of the Divine nature and government has been sacrificed in the theory of probation, whose logical outcome is its extension beyond death until every soul has faced the "historic Christ." The antediluvians were not fairly treated, if this theory is true; the patriarchs had an exceedingly hard time of it; the millions of the heathen have been cruelly neglected of God, though we hope that He will settle His account with them by and by to their satisfaction; only a very insignificant part of the human race has been treated in moral equity, though between this and the final judgment God will correct all the blunders of His past and present administration. But who has authority to say that righteousness and grace are thus held in practical suspense, and relegated to the unknown future? If all this issues from the doctrine of mortal probation, then for one, I will

eliminate it as an Arminian heresy from my dogmatic system, rather than destroy the ethical unity of God's character, and deny the fact of a present and universal order of righteousness in human history.

I want a present and living God, a God who puts His whole ethical being into every moment of time, who deals with every soul, infant and adult, Christian and pagan, in Jesus Christ; though I may not be able to make manifest to my reason this immanent and universal blending of righteousness and grace. I appeal to the Scriptures, and to the natural force of their language, that God is neither an omnipotent and exclusive energy, nor a mechanically immutable and unemotional entity, nor an arbitrary and partial Sovereign, nor a being in whom ethical unity is a figment, of whom the organic balance and living co-operation of moral qualities can be affirmed only as a transcendental fact, and who deals with men on purely arbitrary principles, suspending a present, moral equity of administration for a future impartial treatment; but the "Father" from the beginning, and the Father of all men. This is the last and inclusive word in the

self-revelation of God to men, and he who contents himself with anything less, robs himself of what the best thought of God can give him, and so far forth he fails of conveying the full spiritual power of his message. For this is the mind of the Holy Spirit, that it hath pleased the Father, by the blood of the cross, to reconcile all things unto Himself; and if the history of redemption is the fulfilment of an eternal purpose, the vital unfolding of the eternal thought of God, then you have no right to think of God in any other way. Fatherhood constitutes the final and inclusive definition of His nature, and of His government. The law which commands and exacts holiness is paternal legislation. The severest judgments are the warnings and the punishments of a Father. His pity and His patience are paternal in their quality, scope, and continuance. True, it is an ethical Fatherhood, uniting holiness and love; but it is a Fatherhood, not an ethical, imperial sovereignty, or merely moral governorship. The paternal conception of God does not ignore the ethical element of holy authority, but transfigures it under the higher thought of an infinite,

universal, absolutely unselfish love; and, in so doing, it legitimates that estimate of man which has already commanded our attention. The rational, voluntary, and joyful recognition of these organically related estimates of what man is, and what God is, constitutes the essence of spiritual-mindedness, and every sermon issuing from such an habitual mental and moral temper will be made in the Holy Ghost, and will be preached in the demonstration of the Spirit, and in power. For the Word of God is only then preached, when it conveys the Father's message to His blind and wayward and guilty children.

A consideration of the methods by which spirituality may be cultivated and cherished, is a matter of too serious moment to be overlooked, and too important to be despatched in a few sentences. I shall, therefore, resume the discussion at this point in the next lecture.

II.

In defining spirituality as a fixed mental and moral habit, to be carefully distinguished from ecstasy or from emotional excitement, having its rational ground in the clear discernment of what God and man are in their essential nature, and in their mutual relations, and its ethical quality in the voluntary and habitual subjection of the conscious and active life to the judgments which such discernment forms, I have propounded no theory of my own. I have simply given to the language of Scripture its natural force. Spirituality is, in the carefully selected phraseology of Paul, *φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος*, the mind of the spirit. The word *φρόνημα* has no exact English equivalent. It is not synonymous with *νοῦς*, the equivalent of our word understanding or reason, the faculty of rational perception and judgment. Our

nearest approach to such a use of the word "mind" as makes it reflect the meaning of *φρόνημα* is in the frequent popular saying, "I have a great mind to do this or that," a phrase which not only expresses a rational judgment, but also announces an intention. *Φρόνημα* is derived from the root *φρήν*, which, literally, means "diaphragm," the muscle which separates the heart and the lungs from the lower viscera, and so it became descriptive of all the organs clustering around the heart, which together constitute the seat of physical life. By a natural transition it was carried up to describe the interior constitution of the invisible and conscious self, the sum total of the soul's rational, emotional and volitional powers, the organ of grief, love, anger, and courage, of mental perception and thought, of will and purpose. It is the man in the centre of his personality, stripped of all that is seeming and accidental. The "mind" in you is what you are, in your thoughts, desires, and aims. Not all the thoughts which you have belong to your mind, but only such thoughts as are intensely vital, stirring your deepest emotions and impelling

you to action. Not all that you feel belongs to your mind, but only such emotions as spring out of your thoughts and shape your conduct. Not everything that you do shows what your mind is, but only such actions as are the outcome of rational conviction and genuine love. The "mind" of a man, is what he is, in the organic unity of his secret thoughts, affections, and aims. He has the mind of the flesh, if the gravitation of his inmost self is towards the things of the flesh, the things that minister to selfish ease and ambition, no matter how refined his pursuits and habits may be. The carnally minded man is not necessarily a coarse man. He need not be a glutton, or a drunkard, or a debauchee. He may be a man of blameless reputation. But he is, everywhere and always, selfish, self-centred, and self-seeking, with his eye on the main chance, taking care of number one, an altruistic egoist if he gives any thought to his neighbor, counting nothing real which does not bring present and tangible advantage. And to be spiritually minded is to have the thoughts, the desires, and the aims of the spirit, to survey and measure all things from the centre of the

invisible and the eternal, judging yourself as God judges you, treating your fellowmen as God would have you treat them, estimating life as God estimates it, honoring God as He deserves to be honored.

A curious illustration of the vagueness which encompasses this important question of spirituality, the mental fog in which many preachers labor when they venture to give definite outline to their thought upon it, has recently fallen under my eye in a report of an elaborate sermon, preached by one of our city pastors. The concordance had been freely and faithfully used. There were Scriptural quotations in abundance, and these gave a decidedly evangelical flavor to the discourse. There was a certain rude logical order in the arrangement of the biblical material, but it was purely verbal, and of a real analysis there was not the slightest trace. The only approach to a real discernment of the problem was in the hint, now and then obtruded, that spirituality was the reverse of ceremonialism in worship and conduct; but it was evident that such interjected phrases were little more than the mechanical repetition of current platitudes of

speech, and that their real significance had not become clearly outlined to the preacher's mind. The sermon bore the marks of faithful, painstaking work. The tone was modest and quiet; there was no attempt at theoretical display; and it was evidently the work of an earnest and devout man; but it left the hearer just where it found him, with a mass of biblical texts, not one of which had been compelled to yield its mighty secret. It was unutterably lifeless and dull, for the simple reason that it was unintelligible. It lacked definite mental perception, and, therefore, ended in mental cloudiness and confusion. Much was said about being "filled with the Spirit," but the phrase touched no living chord; it had a mystical ring, as descriptive of some strange, supernatural or miraculous operation, in which the soul is passive, and which defies explanation and expression. It may seem to you a hard and narrow rule, but it is an eminently practical and salutary one for the preacher, as I believe it to be inexorably universal, that what is true is always intelligible, that revelation is unveiling, not mystification, and that the time of the sermon is worse than

wasted, unless the message is so phrased that every man can understand it.

There is nothing shadowy or mystical in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and in the resultant spirituality of life. It is an intelligent and intelligible state. It is conscious and voluntary. The preacher to whom I have referred might have made his sermon luminous and searching by simply inquiring what ceremonialism in worship was. It is membership in the visible church, observance of the Sabbath, subscription to a creed, a reverent posture in prayer, a decent behavior among men, the regular and reverent participation in ordinances. It is devotion to externals. It is contentment with forms. It is regard for appearances. In or out of the church, that is Pharisaism, the mind of the flesh, giving no true liberty, and cursing the soul with drought and increasing impotence. It is living in the realm of the seen and the temporal. And what is the opposite of ceremonialism? It is the worship of God in spirit and truth, the converse which is the natural and habitual outcome of a clear knowledge of what God is and of what you are, the conscious and mutual ex-

change of thought between an erring, needy, penitent child and its Holy, Loving Father, who is in heaven. In or out of the church, that is spirituality, the fixed habit of dealing with invisible and eternal realities. To be filled with the Spirit is simply to be under the dominance of those convictions which give reality to God and the soul, as the two sole factors by which the universe is constituted, and by which time and eternity are shaped. For when the heavens and the earth pass away, God remains and the soul abides. The reason and the will are the sphere of the Divine impact and indwelling; these are not mystical, but dynamic, and they are dynamic by illumination of the understanding and by securing voluntary obedience to the revelation. To be filled with the Spirit is the same thing as being guided by the Spirit into all truth; it is to see things as they really are, and to act in accordance with that vision. Spirituality, therefore, is a rational and voluntary state. It begins with mental sanity, piercing through all shams and deceptive appearances, to God as the Holy Father, and to man as His lost and wandering child. It is easy enough to

repeat these phrases, but they are not real perceptions unless they become the fixed and habitual temper of your whole mental and moral life, the standard of universal rational judgment, and the living law of obedience. With every advance in the clearness of your apprehension of what God is and what man is, there must come, *pari passu*, the prompt and voluntary practical response. You must live as you think; you must be obedient to the heavenly vision; for God and the soul, fatherhood and sonship, are not figures of speech, the empty generalizations of the speculative understanding, but the only eternal realities in a universe of change.[1]

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[1] The nature of man is rational, ethical, spiritual; it may be regarded as νοῦς, as συνείδησις and as πνεῦμα. How do these differ?

Considered as *rational*, the quest of the soul is *Truth*. Its watchword is *Reality*.

Considered as *ethical*, the soul fixes attention upon a peculiar quality with which truth is invested, giving to it the force of an *imperative*, demanding personal conformity, and enforcing universal self-judgment. Its watchword is *Obligation*.

Considered as *spiritual*, the soul fixes attention upon *God* as the eternal fountain of Truth, and the creative source of Moral Law, *Himself* the uncreated and sovereign Reality and Imperative.

I have spoken of spirituality as a fixed mental and moral habit, and habit involves careful and patient cultivation. I proceed, therefore, to speak of the methods by which this quality must be developed into healthy and vigorous maturity. Of these, the first place must be given to attention. If even the physical universe does not yield its secret to the inattentive and superficial observer, if the inspection must be repeated and discriminating, with the persistent use of microscope and telescope and the most delicate instruments, much more true is it that the invisible realities

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Πνεῦμα, as Julius Müller says, does not primarily mean the *human spirit*, but the *Divine Spirit;* and man becomes spiritual only as, by his free act, his rational and ethical life is pervaded, purified, and perfected by and in the Holy Ghost. Spirituality is a voluntary state of rational and ethical subjection. Hence, the Germans translate Πνευματικὸς, by the word *geistlich*, not *geistig*, — *spirit-like;* that is, conformity to spirit, conformity to the Spirit of God. Spirituality represents a capacity, which may and ought to become a reality; but not a constituent element of universal human nature, like the rational or the ethical. Reason is an essential property. Every man thinks. The process is involuntary and necessary. Conscience is a universal characteristic of human nature. It is incapable of increase or decrease. Judas has as much conscience as Paul, or

of Divine and human being demand honest, patient, and prolonged attention. No physiological processes can give us so much as a glimpse of the soul, or cast any light upon its essential constitution. You might as well attempt to construct the science of anatomy by an analysis and synthesis of the deliverances of consciousness. The soul is an ultimate and invisible fact, the whole evidence of whose real existence is crystallized in the personal pronoun "I," and whose real nature can be understood only by the cross-examination which reflection employs. If psychology

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Peter, or John. Every man judges himself, and is the subject of self-approval, or of self-reproach. The process is involuntary and necessary. The spiritual is a constitutional *capacity*, whereby, in a free act and state, man places himself under the tuition and the guidance of God, becoming like Him in thought, in feeling, in volition, and in life. Its distinguishing characteristic is the supreme place which it gives to the *Free Will* in man, that will summoning the reason to face its creative Original, and securing an instant and joyful compliance with the revelation thus imparted. The process, throughout, is rational and ethical; but spirituality results through the habitual temper of voluntary subjection to Him who *is* Truth and reveals it, who *is* Holy and makes us holy by making us like Himself. In other words, man becomes spiritual through the grace of *Faith*.

has been less rapid in its advance than the physical sciences, the reason is that the processes of psychological attention are more difficult and exhausting than the processes of sensuous observation. But he who deals with the souls of men must patiently face his own soul, and cannot be excused from giving continuous attention to what it has to say on its own behalf.

Nor can there be any real conviction that there is a God, much less an adequate knowledge of what He is, except by profound and habitual attention to all the media through which His eternal Godhead is disclosed. The conviction is intuitive only in the sense that it is not foreign to the mind, intruded upon it from without, traditional, or the refuge of mental impotence, the necessary choice between two inconceivables. It is intuitive because it is inevitable to him who reflects, and because repeated attention makes it only more irresistible to thought. It is not the precipitate of observation; it emerges in rational reflection. I need hardly remind you that the elaborate ontological, cosmological, teleological, and historical arguments for the Divine existence are no longer regarded

as invulnerable and conclusive. They assume what they prove; they do no more than trace the reflecting process by which the native and personal conviction justifies and interprets itself. No man climbs to the throne of God, by the pathway of the stars, who does not find the evidence of His existence and sovereignty first of all, in himself. I do not mean that there is any God-consciousness in him, — a barbarous translation of the German phrase, which strictly means only a native, rational, immediate conviction of the Divine existence. Consciousness is only of self; but a rational attention to what this consciousness of our personal, mental, and moral states discloses, finds its root and synthesis only in the affirmation of the Divine existence and supremacy. The rational and the ethical, as we are conscious of them in ourselves, are uncreated and absolute in their quality; we cannot think of them as relative and limited; and our whole conscious life is thrown into endless and hopeless contradiction, unless we postulate the existence and the sovereignty of Reason and Right in the uncreated and eternal personal God. The process is not one of speculation, but

of definition by attention. Attention scatters the mists, and reveals the uncreated glory, the eternal and sovereign reality. In biblical phrase, God reveals Himself to man, through faith; to him whose attention is voluntary, sincere, and habitual. Here is our first duty; to meditate long and lovingly upon ourselves and upon Him whose image we bear, until God and the soul shall master us with their reality.

You are already prepared for a second suggestion, that if you would be spiritually minded, you must be men of prayer. For such attention as I have emphasized, is itself the heart of prayer. The Socratic method is the spiritual method. It bristles with interrogation points. It is perpetually asking questions, seeking that it may find, knocking that doors may be opened. For while adoration, and confession, and thanksgiving, are inseparable from true prayer, petition is its heart; and petition always subordinates its request to the Divine will, the demand softening into the inquiry what that will is, so that we may pray as we ought. There is a lower use of prayer in which many rest. They come to God only when they need something, when the guilt

and shame of sin oppress, when grief embitters life, when the spirit is overwhelmed with the sense of its weakness. The Lord is a strong refuge and a high tower, into which we run when our spears are broken and our shields trampled into dust. We think only of ourselves, and our speech is burdened with the enumeration of our wants. But it is far more important that God should have His way with us, than that we should have our way with Him. For God knows us infinitely better than we know ourselves, and we shall ask most wisely when we let Him show us His mind. The twenty-third Psalm is the sweetest of all religious lyrics, because of its discovery that God is the Shepherd of the soul. That not only secures against want; it drives out the very thought of want, so that David has no request to make. The path is always luminous, the table is always a royal banquet, the way is always secure, and even the grave is within the enclosure of the Divine pasturage.

This is the higher use of prayer, in which we question God about what He is and what we are, setting our psalm of life to

the key of His self-revelation. He who does that will be jubilant, not sad-toned; for all God's thoughts are a Gloria in Excelsis. It is the law of true politeness, when you are a guest, not to talk about yourself, unless your host leads the way and pursues the inquiry. You win his favor by admiring his home, his grounds, his library, his pictures, by falling into his line of thought, and enriching yourself by his experience. The more renowned and successful the man whom you meet, the more anxious you are to let him tell his story to you. If I could have Paul as my guest a week, I would not use five minutes of the time to tell him what I thought, nor would I open Meyer or Godet once during the interview. I should do nothing but ask questions, and let him do the rest of the talking. I should be perpetually anxious to know his mind. And to know the mind of God, what He thinks, desires and purposes, and what He is, is the highest function of prayer. You do not need to tell Him what you are, for He knows more than you do about that; let Him tell you what He is, and how He regards you, for you will never know either, unless you sit

silently and attentively at his feet. And this inquiring attitude must be habitual. It is well to pray morning, noon, and night; it is well to pray when you open your Bible and choose your text; it is well to pray with pen poised over the blank sheet; it is well to pray before you utter the first word of your message; but you may and must do more. Docility must be ingrained. Reverence must be habitual. Prayer must be your native air. In the utmost strain of your intellectual activity there must be a receptive and inquiring temper, which makes you eagerly responsive to anything which casts new light upon the character of Him in whom all live and move, and by whom all must be judged. So shall it not be you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who dwelleth in you.

No mistake, however, could be more serious than to imagine that because spirituality is the fixed mental and moral habit of dealing with the invisible and eternal realities of God and the soul, matured through attention and prayer, it is therefore best promoted by contemplative devotion. Self-absorption, even when deal-

ing with the thought of God, has its dangers. We may easily mistake our fancies for the suggestions of the Spirit, as the ignorant and untrained are perpetually tempted to do. The old slave population of the South were the professed recipients of many such revelations; but an honored friend of mine, whose early ministry was spent among them, said that the men thus honored, confessed, when they were questioned, that the Holy Ghost used the negro dialect, never the speech of a white man. That pricked the bubble, and proved the inspiration to be a mental hallucination. True spirituality is catholic and cosmopolitan. It moves along that level of common sense, which is a universal inheritance and possession. It deals with realities which lie close to all earnest thought. All souls are alike, and God does not change. He cannot be to me what He is to no one else. His impartiality as the Father of all men, forbids the notion that He will make me the special and exclusive organ of a revelation, which wakes no response in any other heart, and which good and true men reject as blasphemous and silly. So I would

rather mistrust my own judgment than break with the general drift of testimony in the living community of believers. There is a *via media* between intellectual isolation and an unreasonable subjection to traditional judgment. True thought is like a magnet introduced into a mixture of iron particles and sands. It sifts by attracting. The thought which attracts nothing to itself, proclaims itself thereby unmagnetized and untrue. What I see everybody else can see, if they will only use their eyes, though no one may see it until I direct his attention to it; but if no one can see what I claim to see, the natural inference is that there is something wrong with my eyes, and that it is time for me to consult an oculist. No one can see for me; but the general perception is more trustworthy than my own. For if a thing is real, it must at least be real to every one who is constituted as I am. It is not otherwise with spirituality or the perception of invisible realities. These, too, must be dismissed as illusions, unless other men yield their prompt assent. They may have escaped attention, but they must compel conviction from every honest

and thoughtful man. Upon no other theory can we cherish the assurance that Christianity is destined to supplant every other religion. It must triumph by its inherent energy to subdue all rational and sober thought.

With this corresponds the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Individuals are the organs of His special revelation, and so become qualified to act as inspired prophets and apostles, only because the entire household of faith is under His instruction and guidance. The apostle does not stand alone; he is only the organ of the Church, making clear and articulate the universal conviction, vague in the many, definite in him, and through him becoming definite in all. The Church is spoken of as the Body and the Bride of Christ; and union with Christ by the Spirit is always represented as involving spiritual fellowship with the Christian community. The tuition of the Spirit is not exclusively individualistic; it is also generic and social. It is carried on, corrected, and completed in the household of faith. It may seem as if the estimates of God, and of man, which I have so frequently

emphasized, as the sources of spiritual power, are the spontaneous suggestions of clear thinking; but they are not. They have never emerged as vitalizing elements in pagan philosophy. That God is Father, and that man is His child, is the peculiar and authoritative testimony on the nature and relations of God and man, which is the priceless heritage of the Christian Church. You and I have learned the lesson from her lips, though it depends upon us whether it shall be merely a traditional shibboleth, or a vital and vitalizing truth. It is not true because she has taught it; she has taught it because it is true; but we have come to the knowledge of it through the Word which she has preached, through the sacraments which she has administered, and through the prayers which we have caught from her lips. So far I, too, am a Churchman, and draw back from the erratic tendency of an isolated individualism. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, which is the household of the Spirit, and to whose consentient testimony I bow, as embodying a profounder and healthier wisdom than my own. And in so doing, I learn to dis-

tinguish between the shadow and the substance, between a mere mental impression however vivid, and the living reality, which is universal and cogent in many minds, between an illusion and a revelation. Other men, too, have the Spirit of God, and are guided by Him, and He cannot be supposed to produce isolated and contradictory impressions, so that comparison and elimination of that which is purely individual, must help us in the discovery of what the Spirit's teaching really is. This will secure for us mental modesty and moral sobriety, indispensable qualities for the Christian preacher.

The critical and sifting process must be carried a step farther. For the Church that now is, is herself the product and the vehicle of an inherited faith. In this matter the third century has no advantage over the nineteenth. The stream must be traced to its sources, for in the origin of the Church we must find the root of her past and her present authority. The documentary records of our faith, therefore, are, and must ever be, of special significance. If we must test and correct our subjective mental impressions by the spiritual testi-

mony of the Church, we are further bound to test and correct the latter by the judgment of the Holy Oracles, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This legitimates the Great Reformation of the sixteenth century, and constitutes the sufficient and unanswerable reply to the charge of schism, for the separation was made inevitable by the movement of return to the form of Christian doctrine as contained in the Pauline epistles, to which on any theory, a higher authority must be conceded than to any subsequent decrees of councils or judgments of individual men. No interpretation of Christianity can maintain its ground which does not fully and fearlessly challenge comparison with the transmitted testimony of those who founded the Church. Pure Christianity must be primitive Christianity, in its ruling conceptions and principles, whatever enrichment subsequent thought may have added, either to creed or ritual. The oak is not the acorn, but the germinant seed contains the type and the law of all succeeding development. That which is an involuntary and necessitated process in physics, must be secured by critical comparison in all movements of

voluntary life. The State perpetually appeals to its fundamental law, to the intention of its founders, whose political wisdom it hesitates to call in question, for it may be assumed that the men who are summoned to meet great and grave emergencies will be guided to discharge their duties with a sagacity and a courage equal to the task. The stars on the national banner may be increased fourfold within a century, but the flag remains the same, and the ruling ideas of the constitution continue to be the controlling forces of the national development. Christianity with its wider outlook, conscious of its Divine origin, and ambitious of universal supremacy, is forced to the most careful and exhaustive criticism of its documentary records, which contain the story of the planting and the training of the Church. The New Testament must be our final court of appeal, compelling us to reject all that is subversive of its teaching, and remanding to the sphere of personal liberty everything upon which it does not speak with clear and decisive authority.

Primitive Christianity is the only rational formal basis of Christian union, not the

councils of the first six centuries, nor even the Apostles' Creed, whose doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades trenches upon the inferential and doubtful. So long as this result has not been reached, the debate between Wittenberg and Rome cannot be concluded; and within the lines of Protestantism, the severe cross-examination must continue until the ferment and the friction of thought shall undermine all unauthorized claims, eliminate all foreign elements in doctrine, polity, and ritual, restoring the simplicity and the vitality of the apostolic faith. A historic episcopate, for example, is an illogical compromise, and an impossible condition to Christian Catholicity. Its antiquity may be admitted, its beneficent historical influence may be granted, but it can never be made binding unless the Acts and the Epistles disclose its apostolic institution. The testimony of the Church is not to be lightly esteemed, and we should be hesitant to charge its leaders with deliberate deception, but we are bound to test all its judgments by the authority of the Scriptures, which on any theory of their origin, is primary, and so far plenary and final. If we may

not break with the living Church, much more, and on that very account, may we not break with our Bibles. Spirituality must move within the sphere of scriptural testimony. Our mental impressions must be tested and corrected by the records which contain the primitive revelation. Our views of what God is, and what man is, must combine into exact and harmonious proportions, all that is disclosed in precept and in promise, in judgment and in blessing, in personal discipline and in national history. God and the soul are the great, permanent invisible realities; they constitute, for us, the moral and eternal universe; and of these realities, the Scriptures give us the oldest, the completest, and the most authoritative account. They constitute a carefully prepared and sifted library on these important themes, which we neglect at our peril in the study of God and of man; and spirituality preserves its healthy tone, guarded from the extravagances of unregulated individual conceit, only by a careful and habitual attention to what the Holy Oracles teach. They must be our celestial telescope,

through which we discover the secrets of invisible being.

One more step must be taken. For while the Scriptures are the authentic and authoritative record of the revelation of God to man, they are not themselves the revelation. The Divine disclosure, as the record plainly shows, passed from lower to ever higher stages. It became more definite, more exalted, more fruitful, more energetic, until it culminated in the holy mystery of the Incarnation. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but in Jesus Christ the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. It is a long step from Moses to Isaiah, and a longer step from Malachi to John. If we had only Moses, we should have much; but having Christ, it behooves us to honor Him as our Master. It is the theology of Christ we want. It is the spiritual vision of Christ, His estimate of God and of man, which we should strive to attain. And by that I do not mean the separation of Christ and of His teaching from all that preceded His advent, and followed after His ascension. Cut the heart out of the body, and both become lifeless. Christ is the heart

of the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, and the criticism which proceeds upon the principle of excision will have neither a living Christ, nor a living Bible. The God-man emerges in the fulness of time, and He can be understood only in the light of his vital environment, as the hope of all the prophets, and as He to whom all apostles bear joyful and united testimony. But He is the sun in the hierarchy of spiritual teachers. He is the vine in whom we must have our abiding, if we are to bear much fruit. His flesh we must eat, and His blood we must drink. At His feet we must sit, and His Spirit must transfigure our own. We must not only preach Him, but we must preach what He preached, and as He preached it. It is not enough to hide behind Him; He must shine through us, stirring our hearts, shaping our thoughts, illumining our faces. Ringing the changes on the sentences and clauses of the creeds of Chalcedon and of Constantinople is not preaching Christ. An orthodox Christology does not constitute you a Christian preacher. Eloquent and impassioned eulogy of the Cross is not preaching Christ, and Him crucified. He

must subdue you until your whole rational, emotional, and volitional life moves along the level of His own, until His estimates of God and of the soul become your own, and secure your glad and habitual subjection. For He was God and He was man. He understood both exhaustively, and in His active and passive obedience the mighty achievement of human rescue and redemption was secured. So the world needs to know not only what He is, and what He has done, but what He thought about God and man.

Nay, more, God is what He is, and man ought to be what He is; so that every problem, Divine and human, finds in Him its solution. He must be our guide in the interpretation of the Scriptures. For critical and scientific purposes, it is well to trace the revelation of God in its historical development; but for practical purposes, and in preaching, the order should be reversed, and the voice of Jesus Christ be made to ring in the ears of men. Do not tarry in the outer court. Do not linger in the holy place. The veil has been rent, and you should not stay until your hands are on the mercy-seat. Make

Christ's estimates your own. Think of Him as the manifested God. His tears at the grave of Lazarus, and over doomed Jerusalem, His prayer on the cross for those who put Him to death, and His dying charge to John to care for His broken-hearted mother, are worth more as a disclosure of what God really is, than all the labored conceits of the scholastic philosophers. Get your theology from the parable of the prodigal son. Think of justice as having tears in it. Make the Fatherhood of God, as taught by Christ, and illustrated by His conduct among men, real to yourself, and your preaching will have spiritual power. There is anger in God, but it is always the anger of outraged Fatherhood, and that gives to the Divine anger its moral majesty and power. And what man is, you can best learn from Him who brake bread with publicans and sinners, who blessed the little children, who prayed for Peter, that his faith might not fail, and whose withering curse fell only upon one class of men, the hypocrites, souls honeycombed with falsehood, in whom moral integrity had been deliberately crushed out. The world needs His

Gospel, the Church needs His Spirit more; and His Gospel will not conquer the world, until His Spirit pervades and rules the Church. Nor will it ever pervade and rule the Church, so long as it is in any way restrained in us, who believe ourselves commissioned to preach the Gospel in Christ's name. You must have Peter's vision, that nothing which God has made, and upon which He has set the seal of His ownership and adoption, is common or unclean. The man who is not ready to be the servant of the most degraded has not the spirit of Christ in him; and though he may be tolerated in the Church, he is unfit to take the lowest place in the ranks of the Christian ministry.

Here I must leave you, face to face with Him, whom, having not seen, you love, in whom you trust, to whose service you have pledged your lives, and with whom you must walk, if you would know the truth, and secure the baptism of power. I have taxed your attention long; but the supreme importance of the theme must be my apology and justification.

THE PRACTICAL ELEMENT IN PREACHING.

Among American preachers, Charles G. Finney will always hold a deservedly high place. For whatever may be said of his theological views, of the crudeness of his style, and of his revival methods, they were all the instruments of an intensely earnest nature, and they were wielded with extraordinary power. It was his constant insistence that ministers should preach with a view to immediate results; and that this could be done only as the hearer could be made to see that the theology of the pulpit was rational, vital, and thoroughly consistent. No man believed in sound doctrine more than did he, but his lawyer's instinct made him feel that a doctrinal system which put a strait-jacket upon him, and prevented him from securing a prompt and practical response, ought to be flung aside, and discarded without a moment's hesitation. And

therein he was right. There is such a thing as dogmatic tyranny, against which the pulpit is summoned to exercise eternal vigilance. As between the chair of dogmatic theology and the pulpit, the primacy belongs to the latter; and whenever a system becomes so hard and unyielding that it withers the sinews of practical appeal, it has not only outlived its usefulness; it convicts and condemns itself as both illogical and inadequate. A theology which cannot be preached fearlessly and faithfully, which takes refuge in wire-drawn distinctions and reservations, which confuses the speaker and confounds the hearer, cannot be a true reading either of God or man. God is not playing hide and seek with us, and we may not speak to men in His name, using phrases and defending doctrinal statements which perplex an honest soul.

It may be that Mr. Finney has unconsciously overdrawn the picture of the preaching to which he was accustomed to listen in his early manhood, when men were urged to repent, and then told that the very ability to repent was the gift of an unconditional decree of Divine election; when they were summoned to believe

in Christ, and informed in the next breath that they could not believe until they had been supernaturally regenerated. The description, however, is anything but a caricature. Thousands of men have felt the palsying effect of the system against which this fiery preacher revolted. The memory of such preaching comes back to me, with the terror and agony which it awakened, supposed at the time to be evidences of a Divine operation, but which I have long since come to regard as diseased mental and moral states; and I have good reason to believe that this style of preaching is far from having become obsolete. In a recent correspondence with the head of one of our American theological seminaries, the position was deliberately taken that all true moral freedom was lost in the fall of our first parents, that the only liberty which survived the apostasy in Eden was the formal one of choosing between different courses of sin, leaving the soul unconditionally dependent upon an act of Divine power before it was invested with the ability to repent and believe. It is possible for a man to hold such a speculative system, and then preach with an utter

disregard to it, on the principle that as the Divine decree is secret and unsearchable, every man must be addressed as if no such decree existed; but in such a case it might be as well to eliminate the doctrine of decrees altogether. The longer you preach, the profounder will become your conviction that men can be quickened into spiritual life only by the power of the Holy Ghost; and you will discover, *pari passu*, that you cannot grapple with men unless you charge upon them the full and exclusive responsibility for their moral state. These are the two poles of thought between which all theology swings, with the constant temptation to eliminate either the one or the other in the interest of scientific unity. The worse heresy, however, of the two, in my deliberate judgment, is that which fails to emphasize the reality of man's moral freedom; which, for example, appears to invest him with it in recognizing his natural ability, and then reduces it to zero by the doctrine of moral impotence.

But whether you agree with me in this attitude or not, the point of urgency is this, that your theology must be the outcome of your preaching, not its antecedent,

superimposed condition and limitation. It must be forged anew, link by link, in your earnest grapple with men. The Word of God is a hammer, a coal of fire, a two-edged sword. A hammer breaks; fire burns; the sword pierces; and you must have a theology which does all that. Do not understand me as undervaluing thorough and systematic theological training. The years which you are spending in these quiet halls, and under the instruction of tried and trained teachers, are years which you should improve to the utmost. They will familiarize you with the great systems of thought, which have been patiently wrought out amid the stress and strain of fierce controversy; and there is nothing so conducive to mental sobriety and balance as the careful study of historical theology. The sublime unity of the Christian faith will command growing and grateful recognition amid the widest diversity of statement. The discovery will give you anchorage for all the years to come; it will prevent you from mistaking eccentricity for originality, and will guard you from that waste of intellectual energy, which ignorantly spends its strength in rehabili-

tating old and exploded dogmas. But this conservative temper, provoked and fostered by historical study, will also make you more genuinely and profoundly catholic. It will make you impatient of theological partisanship. Robertson, of Brighton, made frequent use of the principle, which he borrowed from the Hegelian philosophy, that all true thought proceeds from thesis and antithesis, to synthesis, from affirmation and denial, to a more comprehensive formula. It is Athanasius against Arius, Augustine against Pelagius, Anselm against Grotius and Socinus, Luther against Zwingle, Calvin against Wesley; and the heretics manage in time to tone down the extreme positions of their antagonists. The living thought of our time refuses to be confined in the vocabulary of any preceding theological school; and what we have been pleased to call consistent Calvinism, or improvements upon the Genevan theology, is only a euphemism covering the practical abandonment of certain positions once deliberately taken and stoutly defended. In this matter Princeton has been as great a sinner as New Haven; and Charles Hodge was as much

an innovator as Nathaniel W. Taylor; while the younger Hodge found it necessary at almost every step to say that he did not quite agree with his father, or that he preferred a slightly different statement. Calvinism has been Arminianized, and Arminianism has become Calvinized; and the patient reading of Wigger's monograph on Augustinianism has convinced many of us that Pelagius was not so great a heretic as we once imagined. There is something to me very suggestive in the fact that of all the fathers, as we call them, the most modern is Chrysostom, who was a great theologian only as he was a great preacher, working out his theology under the pressure of tremendous practical emergency. No system of theology can be absorbed, which must not be again broken to pieces, and passed through the fiery crucible of personal meditation, shaping itself into logical forms and phrases of your own, before you can find the truest freedom in preaching. You must wear your own coat, fitted to your own person; and you must have your own theology.

The conservatism and the catholicity of which I have spoken, should be at once

an encouragement to independence and a salutary restraint upon it. The substance of your message can never be of your invention. But the treasure has come to you in earthen vessels, and even the language of the Bible may be followed in the spirit of mechanical bondage. It is the prophetic and apostolic thought which you must seize, and then reproduce it in your own vernacular. For language is everywhere mobile. It is in perpetual flux. It bears the impress of time. The dictionary is not always an infallible court of appeal. Classical usage may mislead you. And if this is true, even of the Scriptures, much more is it true of the long line of the great teachers of the Church, who have given their best powers to the exposition of the Gospel. Every one of them shows the influence of his training, of his mental and moral peculiarities, of the philosophy which dominated him, and of the logical methods current in his time.

In no department of language is this element of change more patent than in the use made of illustrations. At one time they are imperial, as in the psalms and the prophets; at another time they are

legal, as in the epistles of Paul and in the Augustinian theology; at another time they are commercial or governmental, as in more recent years. Thus on the basis of Paul's comparison between Adam and Christ, introduced by way of illustration, the whole doctrine of sin and of redemption has been constructed, with the notion of imputation rigorously carried through every part. So, again, the idea of a covenant, as embodying the peculiar feature of Jewish national life, has been carried back into Eden, and into the counsels of eternity, resolving all moral history into the execution and fulfilment of a contract. Illustrations are impressive and useful, so long as they are used by way of suggestion; but they are mischievous when they are charged with the office of logical construction; and a very large part of the preacher's intellectual task consists in seizing the vital truth, which hides behind all analogies, and which must not be allowed to become imprisoned in any, using them all, dispensing with them all, and creating more fitting ones, as the case may require.

In all this, one thing requires emphasis, —you must be theologians. You must

have a clear-cut, definite, symmetrical body of religious convictions, supported by a close and patient study of the Bible. You will be despised if your mental equipment consists of rags; you will be laughed at if it is made up of an incongruous assortment of patches. Your doctrinal system may be very meagre, and it may be very comprehensive and exhaustive; but whether the one or the other, it must be homogeneous and consistent, bearing in its every part the impress of your personal elaboration, as the famous shield of classic story is said to have been so forged that were it broken into a thousand fragments, every one of them would have proclaimed the name of its maker. You can make no greater mistake than to abandon the study of systematic theology upon your graduation. In science, in art, you may be content that your hearers shall be greatly your superiors; but in your minute and systematic knowledge of the Bible, the occupancy of a pulpit compels you to seek for such mastery that your aptness to teach will be recognized by all.

Now and then I meet a man who says, "Well, since I left the seminary I have

dismissed theology, and have been content to read the New Testament." But an hour's talk has convinced me that the New Testament had fallen into the same neglect, that the reading had become scrappy and superficial, that thought had become hazy, uncertain, and confusing, and that the preaching had lost its manly vigor. No man can read the psalms, the prophets, the epistles, without girding his intellectual loins, and without being forced to search for and seize the ruling ideas by which all the separate utterances are shaped and co-ordinated. Nothing is of greater practical importance than this personal, independent mastery of the vital theology which is contained in the Holy Oracles. In the prosecution of this endeavor, the best books will soon come under your notice, and find their way upon your library shelves, critical, exegetical, historical, and theological. Nor will you be able to conduct these inquiries without constant reference to psychology and ethics; for it is still true that no difficulty emerges in theology which is not also a problem in philosophy, and in which ethical conceptions do not play a most impor-

tant part. Nor can you afford to ignore political economy, in either of its two great departments, civil and economic science. For not only are these integral parts of the Mosaic code; but the record of Scripture is largely a revelation of God in His treatment of nations, and a disclosure of the forces by which national prosperity, decadence, and ruin have been determined. The science of government is a moral science, because it deals with man, and no governmental statutes may trench upon the moral dignity of the human subject. Nor can economic science, in its discussions, ignore the moral factor, discoursing of capital and labor, of production and distribution, in terms of impersonal speech; for it is the man, who is capitalist or laborer, producer or consumer; and economic regulations and customs must not be permitted to crush or deface the manhood of the lowliest.

In the controversy on electrical lighting, the courts of New York decided that corporate rights were limited by public safety; and that whenever it became clear that human life was endangered by any corporation, the latter became a public nui-

sance, which any man had a right to abate. Man is the only sacred thing on the globe, whose natural rights may not be ignored, who may neither be enslaved nor imbruted. We may do what we will, with all that grows in the soil, or is found in the forests, or is hidden in the earth, or flies in the air, or swims in the sea; but he who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. It is the fearful lesson of universal history, that there is something in man which resents the touch of oppression, so that tyranny always builds its throne upon an earthquake. There is no beast so ferocious, no serpent so venomous, that you cannot exterminate them or drive them into harmless seclusion; but these arts cannot safely be plied with men. The memory of wrong abides; the power of retaliation slowly gathers; the whisper becomes a wail; the wail mounts into a cry of rage; and the rage bursts into blind and ruthless vengeance.

Let us not deceive ourselves. The forces which destroyed Egypt and Babylon, which hastened the fall of Rome, and which heaved in the French Revolution, slumber in every human breast, within

which rankles the sense of wrong. What the white man will not tolerate, the black man will not forever endure; what the rich man resents, the poor man will not quietly suffer; and however proud we may be of our Anglican and American civilization, we must not forget that disdain of man, and injustice to him, develop a storm centre before whose fury nothing can stand. This is the practical side of religion, to love your neighbor as yourself, not to carry him, but to give him all the elbow room which you demand for yourself; and this is not a sentimental duty, a grace of refined life, an ethical superfluity, but the sternest of all political and industrial imperatives, apart from which there can be no permanent security to person or property. To this bold defence of universal manhood, your vocation consecrates you. That must be your message to those who bear rule in the state, and who control the industries of the country, taking care meanwhile not to meddle with questions of method and of application, for which your hearers are presumed to be better qualified than you possibly can be. For the Christian preacher should never permit

himself to sink to the level of a mere social and industrial reformer. He will do his best work if he resolutely refrains from becoming a partisan, from identifying himself with methods and measures which come within the realm of expediency, and the endorsement or criticism of which does not involve the application of universal ethical principles. You are to keep your eye fixed upon the man, made in the image of God, and therefore inviolable; not upon his environment, which is incidental and subordinate, and which in a perfect society would remain as varied as are the capacities and endowments, the industry and energy, of the individuals who constitute the social organism. I do not say that occasions may not arise when you must range yourselves on one side of a great popular contest or on the other, when to be silent would be cowardice and betrayal of your trust; for the pulpit should be God's mouthpiece against tyranny and oppression, whether ecclesiastical or civil or social or industrial. Of this you must be the judges; but you ought to be perfectly sure that an intelligent zeal for God and man is the fire which burns in

your bones, and which unseals your lips, and that it is not a feverish excitement produced by the heated and unwholesome atmosphere of the time.

You will conclude, from what I have said, that a pretty broad field of intellectual activity awaits your entrance, in which your powers will be taxed to the utmost, and incessantly. That is just the conviction which I wish to impress upon you. The preacher's mission is no sinecure. It is not an elegant leisure to which you are summoned, where you may indulge your scholarly tastes, and become the centre of a select and refined circle. You are to be fishers of men, and the most costly tackle in the market is worthless if the trout do not leap when you cast the fly. The Gospel of Christ is needed wherever you go, and you must so preach it as to set men to thinking about the message which you have brought to them. Alas for you if they only praise the sermon, or the grace of your polished utterance; you must plant barbed arrows in their hearts, which shall leave behind them the pain of a godly sorrow. God and Christ, sin and salvation, redemption and

judgment, must be made intensely real to them; and you can make real to others only what is vivid to yourself. So I say again, and would repeat it a thousand times: Be theologians. Let your theology be practical, never swinging in air, but let there be theology. You must have something to say, and the thing which you say must be an expression of the thought of God, and of the mind of Christ; which again amounts to this, that the Christian preacher must be a Christian theologian.

When, twenty-five years ago, I was graduated from the theological seminary, and ordained as pastor over a quiet suburban church on the banks of the Hudson River, I determined that my first work should be a close and patient study of the Person of Christ. I felt that I must know who my master was. The first book I purchased was Dorner's History of the Person of Christ, which still remains the best monograph on the subject. For more than two years I plodded along, reading right and left, as my time and resources would permit, in systematic and historical theology, with close and constant refer-

ence to the Gospels and Epistles as written in their chronological order. I have never regretted the choice I made, nor the studies with which I followed it, when I made Müller's monograph on the doctrine of sin the subject of an equally close reading. I doubt whether a theological graduate can do better now, than to begin his pastoral studies with Christology. Until that is mastered, I would shelve eschatology. For in my deliberate judgment, the constitution of our Lord's Person is the one thing on which the most definite instruction is needed, and with regard to which there is a subtle and insidious tendency in modern thought to depart from the New Testament representation. The evangelical, and even the ecclesiastical phrases are retained; but they are emptied of their meaning. The Incarnation is interpreted in the light of man's creation in the image of God. God and man are regarded as homogeneous in nature, as mutually inclusive, and not exclusive. This philosophical postulate is Scriptural, and is of immense advantage; but it has paved the way for a new series of Christological errors. The man Christ

Jesus, the bearer of a sinless and perfect, an ideal and archetypal humanity, has come by many to be regarded as *ipso facto*, the manifested God; and his deity has been reduced to a unique divinity. It is a new form of Unitarianism, retaining the language which Christian usage has consecrated. According to this view God was indeed in Christ, but only as He is potentially in every man, as He is consciously and energetically in every holy man, as he must be in plenary power in the holiest of men, in the man whose moral altitude is the loftiest.

Such an interpretation might possibly cover the description in the Synoptic Gospels, and even the statements in the Pauline Epistles; but it will not fit the facts which emerge in the Gospel of John, which embodies the ripest fruit of the matured apostolic reminiscence and reflection. For in this Gospel our Lord is represented as having affirmed His conscious existence in Abraham's day, as having claimed the right to equal honor with the Father, and as having prayed that He might be invested with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. The sinless

man could not have said these things, if they were not true; and they disclose to us the deepest ground of His disciplined and matured personal consciousness. There is a great and impassable gulf here between Him and all other men. The period before birth is to us all an absolute blank; and the first years of our infancy are shrouded in the same impenetrable gloom. No philosopher, no saint, has been able to pierce to the beginnings of mortal life. What must the personal consciousness be which leaps back to Abraham's time, and to the period antedating creation? Out of that reminiscence grew in John's mind the doctrine of the Logos, in the prologue to his Gospel; which doctrine is thus seen to be not a speculative notion, borrowed from Alexandria, but a strictly inductive conclusion from the facts which our Lord's utterances disclosed. It may not be possible to define the exact nature of the indwelling Deity in the man Jesus Christ; but it certainly was altogether unique, constituting Him the only begotten Son of God; and the spiritual indwelling of God in believers cannot be accepted as an analogue, for the simple reason that there

were elements in Christ's matured personal consciousness, which are wanting, even in the most rudimentary forms, in the conscious life of humanity.

On the nature of the indwelling of God in Christ, the Church has never been able to pronounce judgment, and it probably will never be able to do so. It has contented itself with negative deliverances. It has rejected Nestorianism, because that kept the God and the man too far apart; it rejected Eutychianism, because that brought them too close together, making of them an incongruous mixture; it rejected Apollinarianism, because that truncated the man; and it has rejected every notion which suggested a dormant, or paralyzed, or quiescent God, or which regarded Him as having reduced Himself to the dimensions of a human soul. It has insisted upon leaving intact the man Christ Jesus; but it has also claimed that what He said about Himself disclosed a unique indwelling of essential Godhood, whose reality cannot be gainsaid without impeaching either his veracity or his mental sanity. And it is equally plain that the unique and mysterious personal constitution of

our Lord gives a peculiar authority to his teachings, a singular force to his precepts and promises, a unique function to his death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession. My apology for this doctrinal digression must be the important part which this theme has had in my own early studies, and the central place which it holds in the theology of the present. The most practical thing any of you can do is to make your footing in Christology firm and secure, so that you can preach the Living Christ as the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation.

Of hardly less practical importance is the rule that the preacher should always aim to make himself perfectly understood by all who listen to him. By this I do not mean that his thought and utterance must be on a level with the youngest and the least matured in his audience. A certain degree of mental and moral activity is required in the hearer; and this preliminary discipline belongs more properly to the household, than to the preacher in the conduct of public worship and in the discharge of his office as a Christian teacher. The pulpit must address itself to men and

women, and to all whose years have brought them to habits of reflection, and to the period of clear-cut conscious personal responsibility; while parents must be urged to be priests in their own homes, rearing their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The pulpit must be masculine, not infantile. Even the children will be attracted by its manliness. For they soon become impatient of any mode of address, or tone of utterance, which suggests condescension on the part of the speaker; and I apprehend that we do not give them full credit for the intellectual and moral activity of which they are competent. Almost before you know it, your boys and girls, if you have cultivated their acquaintance and secured their friendship in a manly way, will become your most attentive listeners and your keenest critics. I have frequently been surprised at the way in which lads twelve and fourteen years of age, and young misses no older, have spoken to me of the help given them by discourses which I had supposed to be beyond their comprehension, in the preparation and delivery of which I had simply endeavored to use the language of the peo-

ple; and my own ministry has convinced me that children are keener listeners than we suspect.

A much more serious and prevalent obstacle to the preacher's success, than the immaturity of his hearers, is the distraction of their thought, their volatile and inconstant temper. They are active about too many things, and the will is not summoned to exert its power of restraint. There is a lack of attention, and that can never be remedied by anything but the manliest address, where weighty thought is communicated in clear, dignified, and forcible speech. Do not put on the air of a philosopher. Do not speak in the language of a professional theologian. On the other hand, do not become a clown nor pose as a wit, nor run into story telling, nor fall into the slang of the street. The true speech of the pulpit is plain, direct, unconventional, conversational, with a quiet, manly dignity befitting the occasion and the theme.

I have spoken of the imperative necessity of recasting the results of your professional studies into logical and verbal forms of your own. The process needs to be car-

ried a step farther, to the translation of your own theological conceptions into the vocabulary of the people. It is reported of one of the Alexanders that he once supplied the place of a theological student in a rural pulpit near Princeton, where no one knew him, and that one of the elders wrote back to the seminary, that while the old man was not as fine a preacher as their regular supply, he was a "mighty good talker," had interested the people very much, and that everybody would be glad to hear him again. A good talker is the most effective preacher. He will wear the longest and command the highest regard. Sound, sensible talk, when it is dashed with wholesome passion, and vital with intense earnestness, will break out into the most genuine eloquence and pathos.

I am afraid that we have studied models of eloquence too much. There is a wonderful similarity between the great and effective preachers of any single period. There is an equally marked difference between the great and effective preachers of any given period, and those who preceded or followed them. There is often the greatest contrast between the early and the

later style of the same man, as may be noticed in the case of Charles H. Spurgeon. The change is partly due to personal development, but mainly to an increasingly closer identification with popular habits of speech. Language, too, is an elastic instrument; it is in a state of constant flux; and the speech of the pulpit, where it is most vigorous and effective, always betrays the current forms of earnest and thoughtful address. As in the pronunciation and definition of words we frequently pass from the dictionaries to ordinary usage, so must language be studied and mastered as a living organism, not as an embalmed or petrified relic of the past. Macaulay, and Robert Hall, and Foster, may be read to great advantage, but so may the periodicals and the newspapers of the present day. The current speech may not be as classical and polished as your scholarly tastes might wish it were, but you must take it as you find it, avoid its coarseness, and make the best use of it possible. You may not ignore it, any more than you would ignore the coat, vest, and pantaloons, which society has adopted as a man's regulation dress. You may think knee-breeches, and a scarlet

waistcoat, and silver shoe-buckles, and powdered hair, and lace ruffles, much more picturesque and becoming, but you would hardly appear in such an outfit in the pulpit. Style is the dress of thought. It must conform to popular usage. It must not be antique and antiquated, but modern and practical. Instruction in rhetoric and logic is not confined to a few classical models; it must be sought, with equal diligence, in the language which the great majority uses.

And this common speech will be found not to be lacking in dignity and force. It is a noble instrument, by the use of which society conducts its intellectual exchange, and whose simple nervous energy the best literature appropriates and preserves. Talk in the pulpit as earnest men talk to each other, and as they talk to you. That will be almost sure to lead you to cultivate what is called extemporaneous preaching, — which is neither memoriter recitation, nor loose, unconnected, unpremeditated speech, — but the free utterance of clear and thoroughly mastered thought. You ought to be able to read a book, and then, without a memorandum to help you, to give an intelligent and connected state-

ment of its argument and conclusions, just as the best recitation in the class-room is the free reproduction of the assigned lesson. I remember reciting page after page of Butler's Analogy without any consciousness of verbal bondage, having been solely intent upon grasping the thought in all its windings and in its logical termination. And you ought to be able to write a careful and connected synopsis of a sermon, amounting almost to a fully written discourse, and then reproduce it in the speech which the thought will spontaneously suggest. The secret consists in the mastery of the matter, and in the clearness of the logical analysis. It involves the abandonment of an ambition to say fine or eloquent things, and to make your discourses brilliant with literary adornment; though the truest eloquence will come often when you are least laboring for it, when your thought is at white heat, and when phrases will leap to your lips which half an hour afterwards you may not be able to reproduce. The secret of forcible extemporaneous speech is in having something weighty to say, and in the determination to make yourself clearly understood. Whether you use the pen or

not, in the work of preparation, is a matter of subordinate importance, though the rule will be a pretty free and careful use of the pen, without a slavish bondage to the lines which are traced upon the paper.

I do not object to written sermons. I do not object to their being read. There are occasions when every man resorts to that method, and for some men it may be ordinarily the best. But I do not believe that the extemporaneous preacher should be regarded as the exceptional man; nor that free speech in delivering the message of God to men is the ideal form, in the sense of its being the prerogative of the elect few. That assumption nips a wholesome ambition in the bud, and will make a young man who conscientiously attempts it feel, in spite of himself, that he is regarded as vain and conceited. The extemporaneous method is the ideal method, only because it is the normal method. It is not the easiest. It is, of all methods, the most exacting and perilous. It exposes to the greatest extremes, and makes havoc of any attempt to maintain a fair average. But its very difficulties constitute its practical power.

It keys the preacher to the utmost physical, mental, and moral tension. It brings out all the man there is in him; while the erectness of his posture, the kindling of his eye, the naturalness of his tone, themselves constitute an instrument of conviction. It is worth all it costs; and there are few men who, by diligent and faithful endeavor through a series of years, cannot become acceptable and forcible masters of extemporaneous speech, while many men part with half of their power through an early and long-continued surrender to the written manuscript. You may not publish as many volumes of sermons if you pursue this method, for a sermon uttered in free, conversational speech hardly ever reads well; but then sermons are not read much anyhow, and when you remember how widely and eagerly Robertson's sketches have been read, not one of which was written before he preached it, you will conclude that a sermon lives not because it was carefully written, but because it was preached at white heat. There is no special need, that I know of, why there should be an increase of sermonic literature, and an average of one printed sermon in

twenty years for every minister in the United States would add annually five hundred volumes to our libraries; so that, on the whole, we might as well be content to let the ordinary sermon do its work at the moment of its utterance. Strike that one blow with all the power that you can muster.

But it is not enough for you to preach in such a way that men cannot fail to understand you. You must command not only their attention, but their approval. By this I do not mean that you are to be anxious of popular applause. Behind many a cheer there is a covert sneer, and at the heart of many a curse there is involuntary homage. Popularity is neither to be sought nor to be avoided; but the assent of the moral judgment should be every preacher's earnest and constant aim — commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The Gospel which you are commissioned to preach is for every man and for all men. It ignores all differences of rank, and distinctions of race, in its urgent appeals to repentance, in its ethical instructions, and in its gracious promises. It is no respecter of persons.

That does not mean that it looks with equal contempt upon everybody, but with equal and genuine regard. It maintains inviolate the prerogatives and privileges, the duties and the dignities, of each and all. It speaks a universal language, touching upon matters which come home to all with equal force. The preacher should never permit himself to speak in such a way as to divide his audience into parties, whose concurrent moral judgment he is unable to command.

This rules out the discussion of all topics, however vital and important in their way, on which equally honest men may earnestly disagree. Never meddle with party politics in the pulpit. It is the devil's snare. The ethical principles involved in the constitution and the administration of government, and in the discharge of the duties of citizenship, are legitimate themes for discussion by the preacher; but the application of these principles to specific cases must be left to every man's independent and intelligent decision. If you advise him from the pulpit, you are assuming the role of a political boss, and the resentment will be natural and righteous. And even

in the inculcation of the ethical principles of political economy, it is the part of wisdom to make them prominent when the popular pulse is not feverish. Election sermons accomplish little good, however cautious the argument, and however unobjectionable the matter, because your hearers will be perpetually wondering what ticket you are trying to help. Don't preach on temperance on the Sunday before the polls open, when the prohibition candidates are canvassing for votes. You may injure a good cause by advocating it at an inopportune time; and even if you are a pronounced political prohibitionist on conscientious moral grounds, many of your hearers are not, and they have as good a right to judge for themselves in matters of practical legislation as you have. Take the stump, if you want to, though I think you had better not; but at all events, let your pulpit voice only the authority of Jesus Christ. A prominent New York pastor told me recently that the most effective sermon which he ever preached on Christian giving fell upon a Sunday, when the baskets were not passed, and the people knew that they would not be. He did it delib-

erately, and the result amazed him. When the next collection was taken, everybody was eager to give, and the contributions doubled. They stayed there, too. The effect was permanent. There is in this a practical hint of the greatest importance, that the minister's best work is always done when no one can suspect that he is posing as a special pleader.

Few things are of greater practical importance, than securing, and keeping, the confidence of your hearers in your personal integrity, and in your enthusiastic devotion to your work. Respect for the cloth is rapidly disappearing. You must be a man among men. Do not whine. Do not fish for compliments. Do not go about with hat in hand as if you were a beggar. Live within your income, and if it is not paid promptly, appeal to the manliness of your church or parish officers. Be a straightforward business man in business matters. Make both ends meet. You can do it as easily as the men to whom you preach, the majority of whom do not handle as much money as you do. Pay your debts promptly, and do not suffer them to accumulate until your people become ashamed

of you and cancel them for you. Such favors will destroy your self-respect, and make you the object of silent but severe contempt. Wherever you are, do your best. Do not permit yourself to regard your parish as only a temporary abode, a stepping-stone to something more desirable and more worthy of you. The men who do that, as I could easily prove to you by reference to living examples, are the bitterly disappointed men, who end their days in neglected sadness. He who seeks his life is sure to lose it. Self-forgetfulness must be your habitual temper. You may see inferior men preferred to you. Honors may come to them, while you are ignored. If so, do not complain. Do not become morose. Do not permit yourself to cherish the idea that you are slighted, or the victim of a conspiracy. Do your own work all the more heartily. Give it all your time and strength. Your church has a right to them, and you will make a most stupendous blunder if you imagine that, by dispersing your activity, you can increase your influence.

Be a king at home, and surrender the domestic reins to no other hands. Be

chary of pulpit exchanges. Preach in your own pulpit, and let your own people see that you do this on principle, and by deliberate preference. And whenever you preach, always do your best. Do not hoard your resources, doling them out by weight and measure, holding back more than you give, from fear that no new supplies can be gathered. Empty the cupboard. The healthiest state you can be in on Sunday night is that of complete exhaustion, not physical, but intellectual; the feeling that you have pumped yourself dry. That will compel you to fresh and deeper study. That will foster the temper of mental vigilance; and that will make you grow. And your people will be quick to discern the generosity and unselfishness of your disposition. Devotion will provoke devotion. Confident of your integrity and fidelity, they will make all due allowances for you. They will not expect you to strike twelve every time you preach; and you will be surprised to find how much of good they discern in your most stumbling speech. Give yourself wholly to them, and put your whole soul into every service, and you will not fail to fasten them to you

as by bands of tempered steel. They will not grow weary of you when you grow old. The dead line in the ministry, as in any other calling, is the line of laziness. The lawyer cannot use last year's briefs. The physician cannot depend on last week's diagnosis. The merchant cannot assume that a customer of ten years' standing will not be enticed elsewhere. And the preacher must be a live, wide-awake, growing man. Let him dye his brains, not his hair. Let his thought be fresh, and his speech be glowing. Sermons, it has well been said, are like bread, which is delicious when it is fresh; but which, when a month old, is hard to cut, harder to eat, and hardest of all to digest. Be resolute in this matter. Some of your friends may urge you to take things more easily. There is danger in overwork; but laziness is more generally the ministerial besetting danger and sin; and as soon as a man yields to that, he will find the people becoming listless, and one by one dropping out of their pews. It is your business to keep them full, so far as Christian earnestness and fidelity, on your part, can do it.

I have but one more suggestion to make,

and that is this: Never fail to make your hearers feel their plenary personal responsibility. Every utterance of the pulpit must urge, either explicitly or implicitly, to moral decision and action. The hearers must be made to see that there is something for them to do, and that it must be done at once, that the moral obligation may be neither evaded nor postponed. However broad the range of your preaching, it must always grapple with the individual conscience, and summon the soul to bow to the moral judgment which it passes upon itself. This is bringing men face to face with God in Jesus Christ; and such preaching cannot fail to be in power, and in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost.

My task is done. I have spoken plainly and strongly, but not unadvisedly. I have brought you the sifted wheat of a quarter of a century of ministerial experience; and I leave you to separate from it the chaff that may be mixed with it. I have put my profoundest personal convictions into these lectures, under the feeling that in this way I could serve you best in the discharge of my duty. I thank you for your patient attention. It has been a pleasure

for me to meet you. I shall always be glad to give you the grasp of a brother's hand; and I shall not cease to pray for you, that your ministry may be abundantly fruitful, bringing glory to our Lord, cheer and strength to your fellow-men, and a deepening joy to your own hearts. Let me close with the great apostle's earnest charge to Timothy:

"*Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.*"

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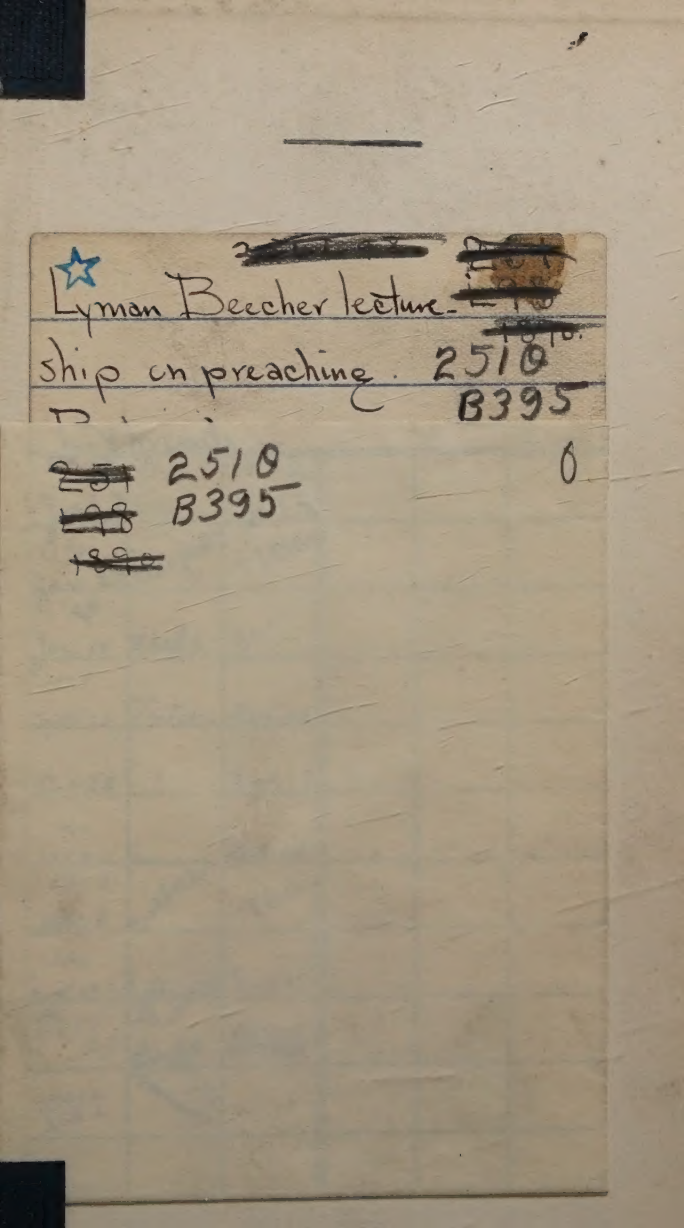
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